Engagement states in decision-making

When analysing data from perceptual decision-making experiments, researchers often assume unrealistic stability of decision strategies over trials. However, decision-making behaviour features significant trial-to-trial variability. One contribution to this variability is transitions between discrete, internal engagement states - our attention may wax and wane over the course of minutes and hours. These states can be identified using hidden Markov models applied to whole session time courses of choices or response times. In my talk, I will discuss the extent to which engagement states are found across species and the role of neuromodulatory activity in causing behavioural state transitions.

Primary author: JOHNSON, Philippa A. (Leiden University)

Presenter: JOHNSON, Philippa A. (Leiden University)

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