

A re-translational approach: Is animal-like anxiety behavior conserved in humans?

Initiative: "Experiment!" (beendet)

Ausschreibung: Explorative Phase

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Our understanding of emotions and emotional disorders is crucially grounded on animal studies mostly performed with rodents. Specific experimental paradigms were developed and specific behavioral responses within the paradigm are interpreted as indication of a specific emotion. However, it is often unclear if these simple animal tests produce a similar corresponding response in humans. This project suggests to systematically use reverse translation of animal tests to examine their translational validity. The radical new idea is to use virtual reality to create experimental paradigms analogous to animal paradigms and thoroughly examine human behavior for similarities with animal behavior. This is a challenging and counter-intuitive approach since human behavior is assumed to be mainly the result of reflective processes (i.e. higher cognitive processes) while animal behavior is assumed to be based on impulsive processes triggered by biologically relevant stimuli or as the result of associative learning. The expected results from this re-translation of "anxiety" paradigms will validate animal research on this topic, may help to improve translational models, and impact translational research in general by facilitating interactions.

Projektbeteiligte

Prof. Dr. Paul Pauli

Universität Würzburg

Lehrstuhl für Psychologie I

Biologische Psychologie, Klinische Psychologie
und Psychotherapie

Würzburg