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Choice blindness persists despite explicit instructions to detect false feedbacks: preliminary evidence for a Bayesian model of choice blindness

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Abstract

Choice blindness is a puzzling phenomenon, showing how people often fail to detect a mismatch between their intentions and outcomes and then confabulate reasons for choices they never made. Despite extensive replications, little is known about the cognitive mechanisms underpinning it. To tackle this question, we report an online experiment showing for the first time that people still illusorily self-attribute unchosen outcomes despite being explicitly instructed to detect false feedbacks. Comparing standard implicit choice blindness with our new explicit task, we show how prior beliefs about manipulations and stimuli discriminability influence detection. Building on these results, we sketch a preliminary Bayesian model of choice blindness suggesting that choice blindness occurs when beliefs in the reliability of feedback override monitoring related cues indicative of a mismatched outcome. Finally, we discuss practical advantages of explicit task to study choice blindness and implications for the sense of agency and self-knowledge.