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The differential effect of explicit and implicit instructions on response execution: a hypnosis study

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Abstract

Our decisions are informed by a variety of sources of information including prior knowledge and contextual cues. Previous research has shown that explicit and implicit cues influence our decisions differently. Using a choice reaction time task, we aimed to explore this differential influence through a Bayesian drift diffusion model of decision making. We contrasted the effect of two types of instructions – one presented in hypnosis and followed by a posthypnotic amnesia suggestion and the other in normal waking state – on drift rate (v), threshold (a), and non-decision time (t). And, we compared this effect between participants who reported involuntariness or amnesia and those who did not. Results suggest involuntary responses to implicit cues may require less evidence to be executed as it was characterized by a lower threshold and a higher drift rate, which should be tested by confirmatory research.