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THE EFFECTS OF WATER INJECTION ON WITHIN SESSION PATTERNS OF RESPONSE FOR FOOD REINFORCERS

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A new concern emerging within Behavioral Psychology stems from the finding that responding within an experimental session produces a bitonic curve. These findings suggest that all previous equations and theories relying on average rate of responding within a session, are conceptually invalid. Although this phenomenon, dubbed the "Within Sessions Effect", has been demonstrated to be fairly consistent, previous studies have failed to find a cause for the ascending or descending limb of the response function. The present study proposes that the decreasing portion of the function may be explained by the increasing thirst produced by the dry food pellets used as reinforcers. The subjects were 6 naive Long Evans hooded rats trained to press a bar on a multiple VI30 schedule of reinforcement. Water bottles containing 150 ml of water were placed in the Standard Operant chambers for 15 of the 30 experimental sessions. As a control measure, empty water bottles were placed in the Skinner boxes for the other, randomly dispersed, 15 days remaining. Results shed light on possible causes for the Within Sessions Effect and suggest alterations in standard operant experimental procedures. The results also suggest implications of an interaction with Schedule-Induced Polydipsia.