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THE EFFECTS OF ALTERNATING REINFORCERS ON WITHIN-SESSION CHANGES IN RESPONSE RATES

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Recent research has studied rate of response within-sessions. McSweeney has found a consistent pattern of response rate within-sessions which is unapparent when rates are averaged between sessions. This rate peaks about 20 minutes into the session then gradually decreases. An explanation for this phenomena has not yet been determined. Six naive female Long-Evans Hooded rats were shaped for reinforcers of both food and water. They were then tested on a VI schedule during hour long sessions with reinforcers of food pellets for the first 40 minutes followed by water for the remainder of the session. Rates of response are expected to be more constant, without a decline after 20 minutes. This would suggest that alternating reinforcers have an impact on within-session response rate. Results such as these would have implications on future design and theory.