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VI RESPONSE FUNCTION AND ELAPSED TIME

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Previous experimentation studying the relationship between response rate and reinforcement rate on simple variable interval schedules has been inconclusive. Some studies have found a monotonic relationship, others a bitonic. The present experiment examined the effects of elapsed time on the response function. Six rats pressed a retractable bar for food while on one of four variable interval (VI) schedules (VI 7.5s, VI 15s, VI 30s, VI 480s) with the bar available only during the first ten minutes or the last ten minutes of 30 minute sessions. A bitonic function was found in all six rats under each condition. However, the function was more strongly bitonic when the bar was available in the last ten minutes of the session. The results support that elapsed session time has an effect on the form of the response function.