John Wesley Powell Student Research Conference

1991, 2nd Annual JWP Conference

Apr 27th, 12:00 PM - 4:30 PM

A Personal Computer Program for Recording Male Rat Copulatory Behavior

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A PERSONAL COMPUTER PROGRAM
FOR RECORDING MALE RAT COPULATORY BEHAVIOR

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In 1988, Gregory M. Holmes *et al.*, published a paper describing a somewhat versatile version of an event-recording program on an IBM-PC. Their program was a modification of an earlier one devised by Rakerd *et al.* Event-recording programs on personal computers are designed to be as simple as and more flexible than the traditional event-recorder.

Though the Holmes program is versatile, limitations remain. We have created our program, CADA (Computer Aided Data Acquisition), to overcome these limitations. Unlike earlier programs, CADA is menu driven. The program is simple to use as the user need not remember any command lines. Our program also displays the test states in real time, with continuous timer display updating and instantaneous updates of frequency values as a key is pressed. CADA allows the observation of up to four subjects simultaneously.

One of the most time saving and useful features of CADA is data exportation. Once data is collected with the program, it can be exported, without modification, into SPSS or any other statistical package for analysis. Other event-recording programs require researchers to manually enter the data into statistical packages, reading from a printout.

Future plans are to create options which allow easy creation of custom variables and keyboard layout to record any type of event sequence. Our goal is to improve the versatility while maintaining simplicity. We then plan to disseminate CADA to others in the research community who would benefit from its use.

CADA was written in BASIC for the IBM-PC. Both William Struthers and Pete Malen used the program to gather data for use in their studies of male rat copulatory behavior. The versatility of CADA will be demonstrated at this conference.