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Does the Location of Pre-Feeding Change the Typical Shape of the VI Response Curve?

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Poster Presentation 36

**DOES THE LOCATION OF PRE-FEEDING CHANGE THE TYPICAL
SHAPE OF THE VI RESPONSE CURVE?**

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Investigations into the relationship between response rate and reinforcement rate have lead to an interest in the nature of pre-feedings and their effect on variable interval (VI) bar pressing in rats. Typically, response rates decrease when food is administered before VI sessions, especially when reinforcement rates are high in those sessions. However, Lionello and Dougan (1995) reported that this decrease in response rate was significantly diminished when reinforcement was temporally spaced and given in the experimental apparatus itself. The current study furthers the aforementioned results reported by Lionello and Dougan (1995). Rats were trained on four VI schedules (VI 7.5s, VI 15s, VI 30s, and VI 480s). The subjects were then exposed to two experimental conditions. In some sessions, the subjects were given their pre-feeding within the experimental apparatus. In the remaining sessions, the pre-feedings were given in a neutral environment, previously unfamiliar to the subjects. Response curves were then plotted to determine the environmental effects of pre-feeding on the typically observed pattern of suppressed response rates. These results from these studies will be used to create more sophisticated quantitative models of behavior.