

# Prospettive di ricerca-azione nei contesti territoriali

Stefano Canali

[canali@sissa.it](mailto:canali@sissa.it)

[\*\*www.psicoattivo.com\*\*](http://www.psicoattivo.com)



SCUOLA INTERNAZIONALE  
SUPERIORE di STUDI AVANZATI  
International School  
for Advanced Studies

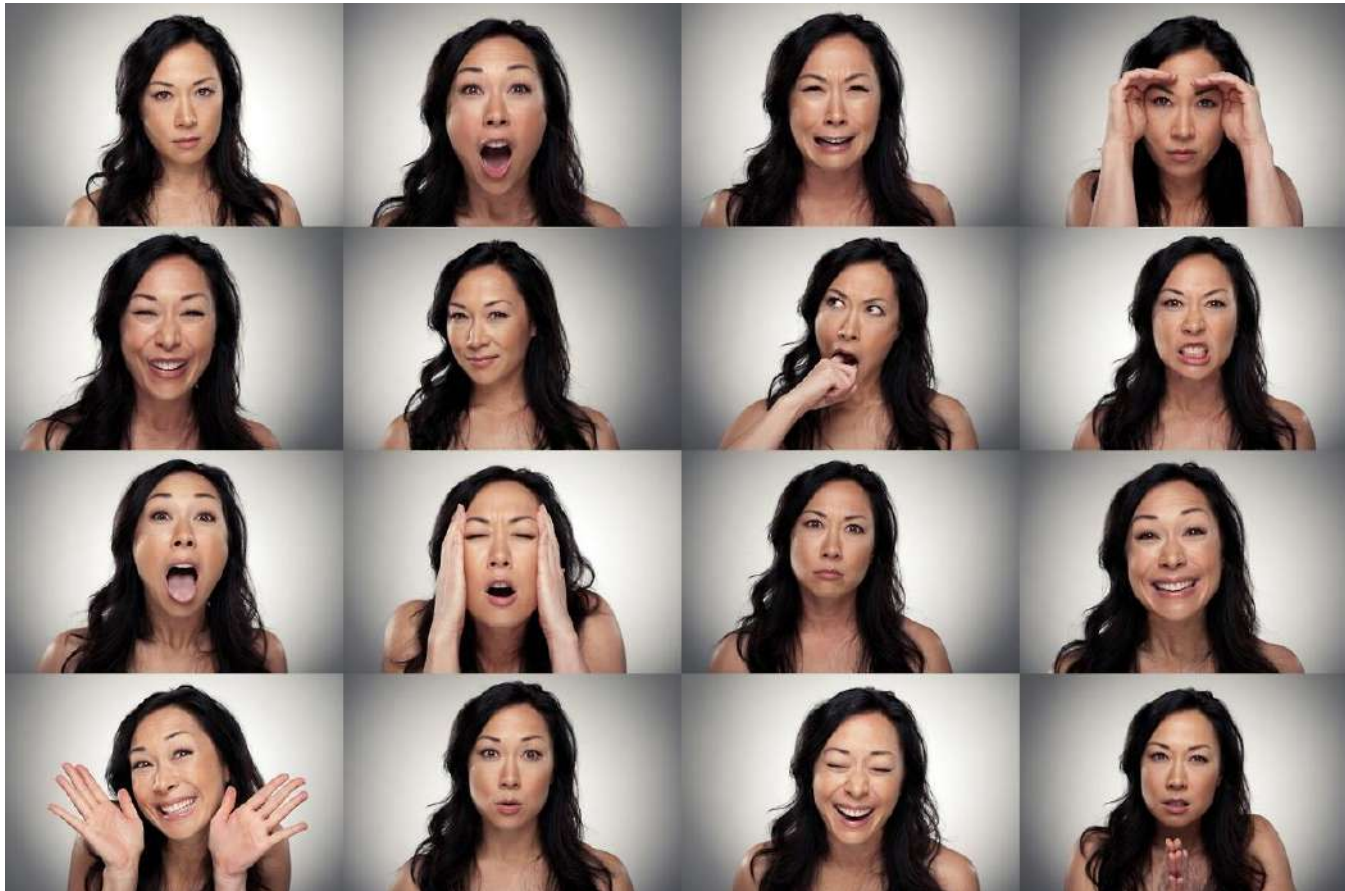
Area Neuroscienze

Laboratorio Interdisciplinare per le Scienze Naturali e Umanistiche

# Emozioni in regola

Progetto di ricerca/azione

SISSA – ASUITS – AAS3 – dipartimento di  
prevenzione FVG



# JUST/2014/ACTION GRANTS

## RISE

**Reinforce Inner Strength Effectively to combat bullying  
Civiform**

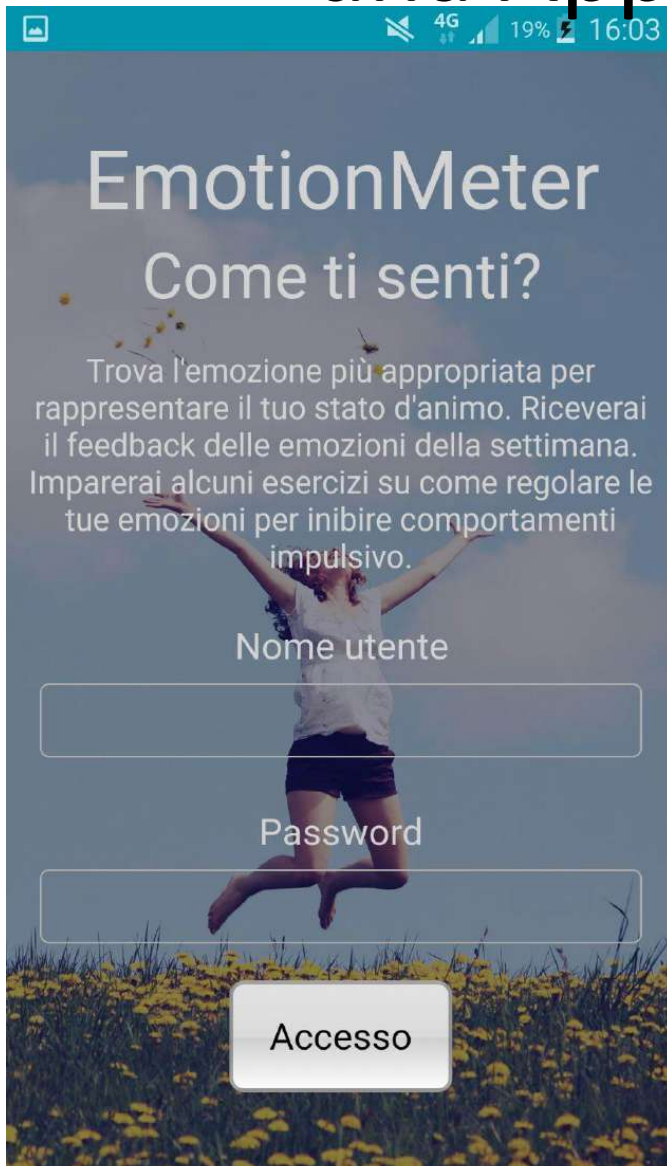


Co-funded by the Rights, Equality and Citizenship (REC)  
Programme of the European Union



**PREVENIRE  
IL BULLISMO:**

# Imparare a regolare le emozioni con una App per smartphone



Progetto biennaleSISSA –  
Regione FVG  
2017-2019





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# General strategy

building the life-skills and inner-strength:

- Strengthening the executive functions (particularly the ability to regulate emotions)
- Teaching self-control
- to promote emotional well-being and teach adaptive coping skills among teens.

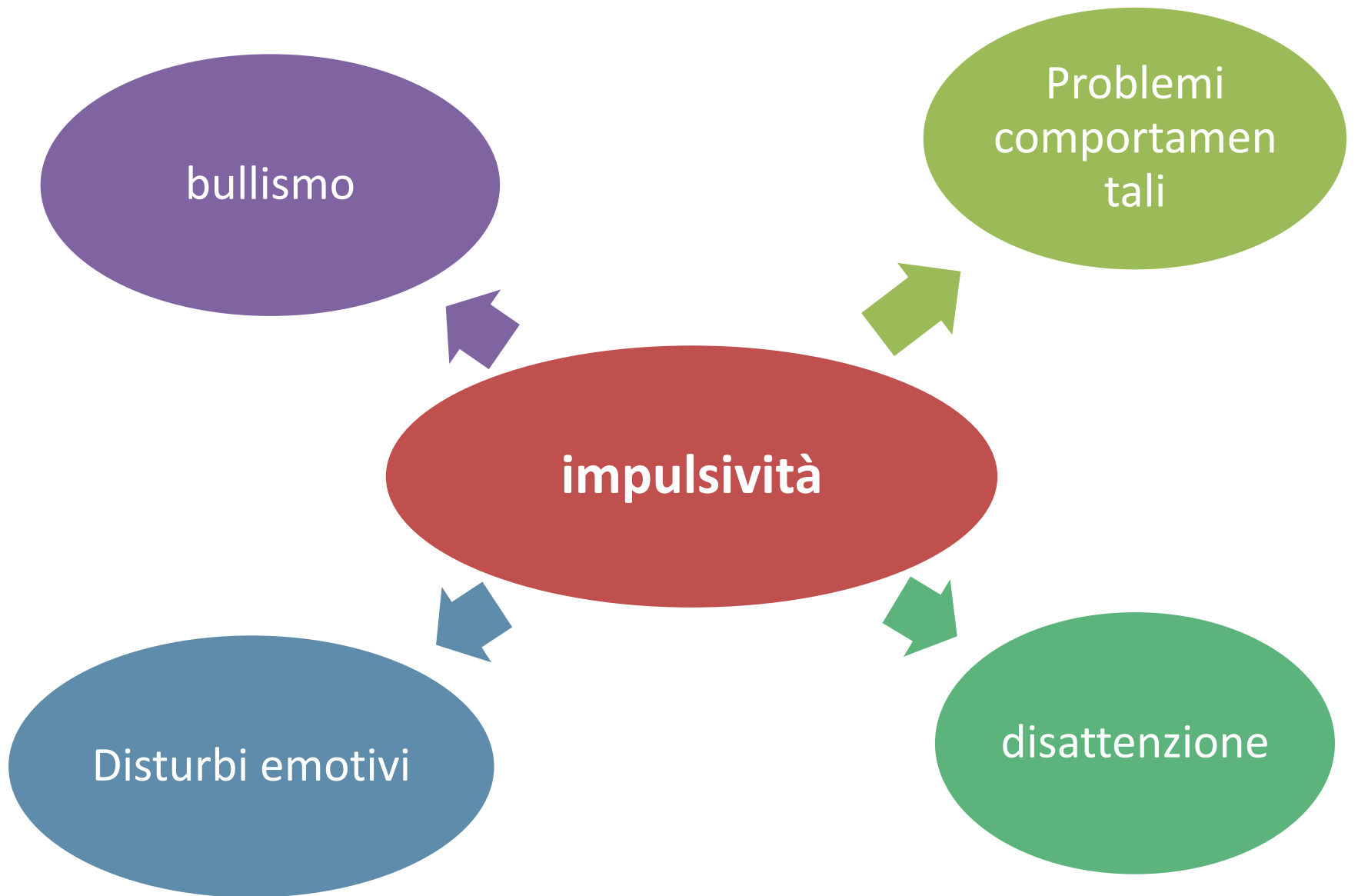
# General strategy: the means

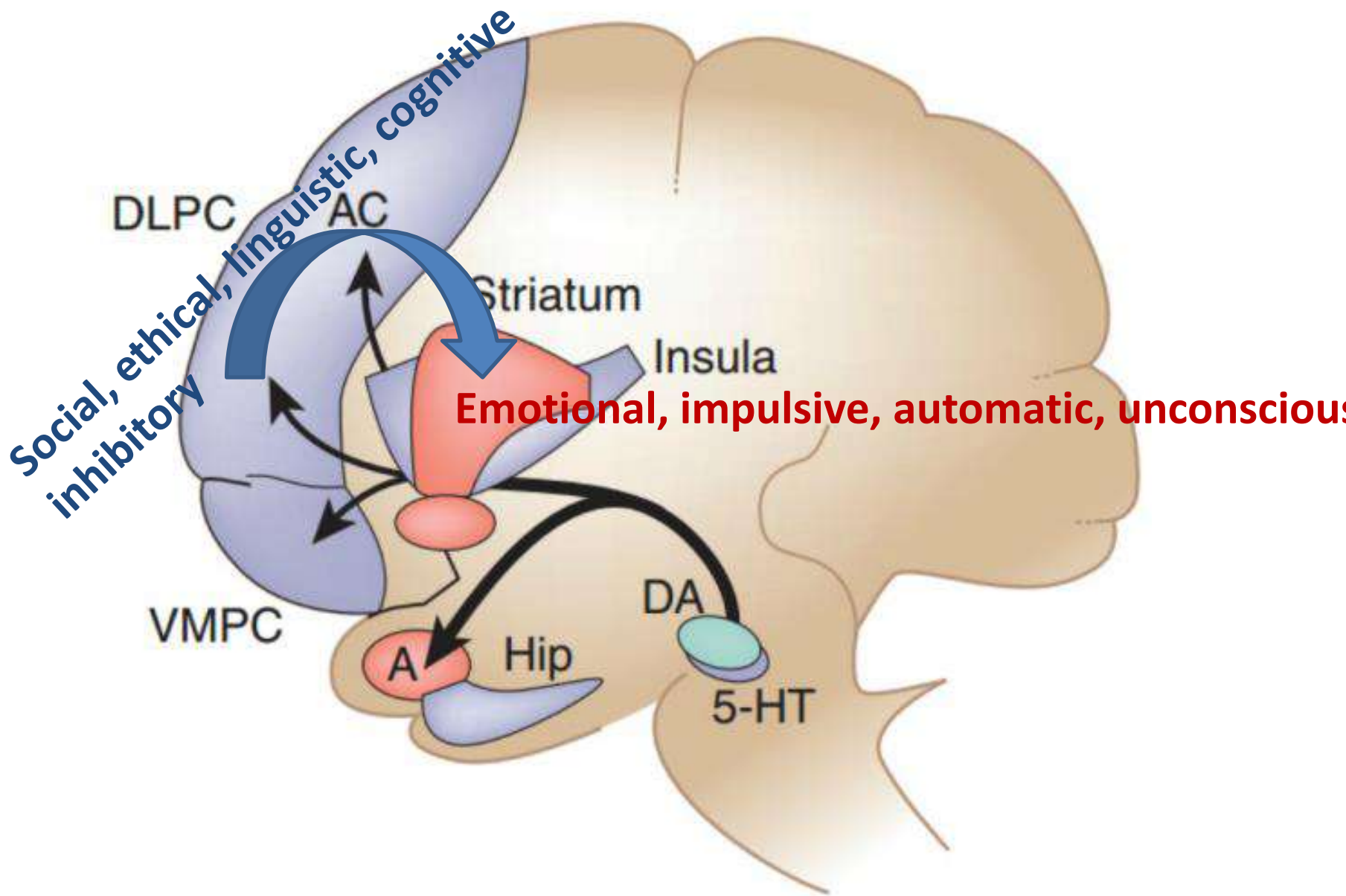
- Brain-based teachings
- Neuroplasticity-based activities
- To increase the knowledge of the mechanisms of the brain and mind
- Teaching of mindfulness techniques
- Sports and physical exercise

SELF-CONTROL

**THE VOLUNTARY CONTROL OF  
BEHAVIOUR**

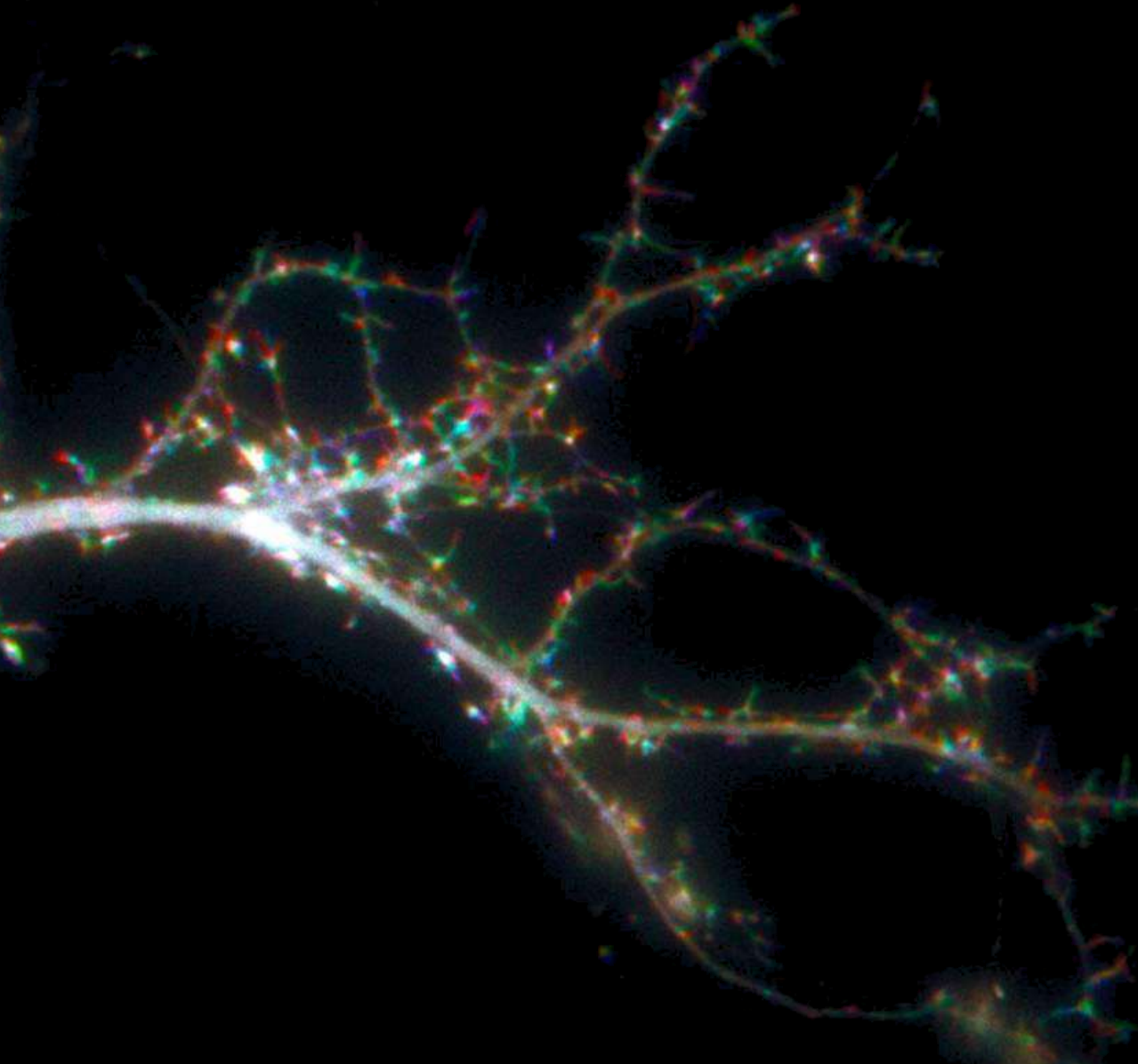






# Neuroplasticity

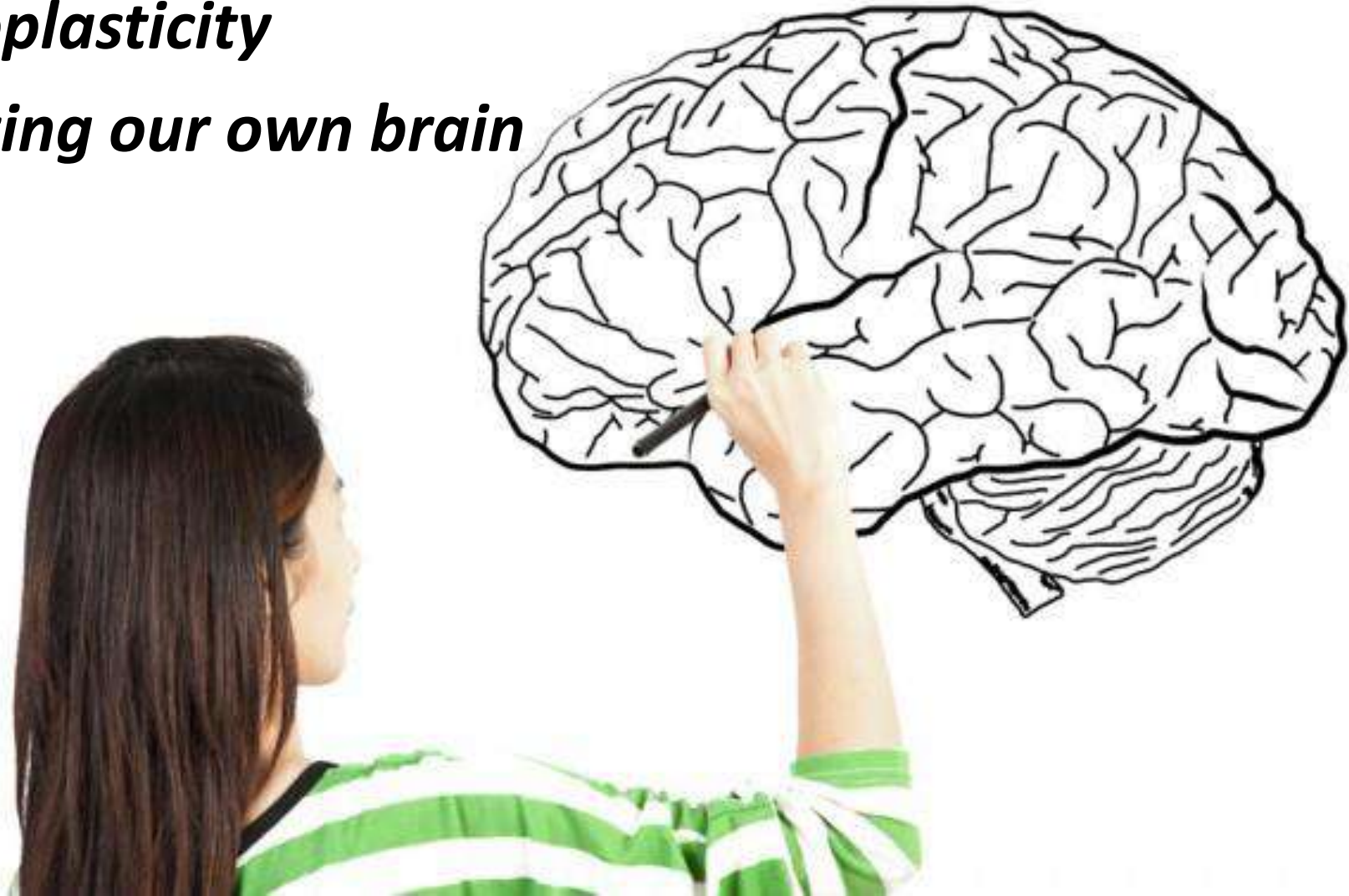
The brain is  
constantly  
building itself



We become what we repeatedly do

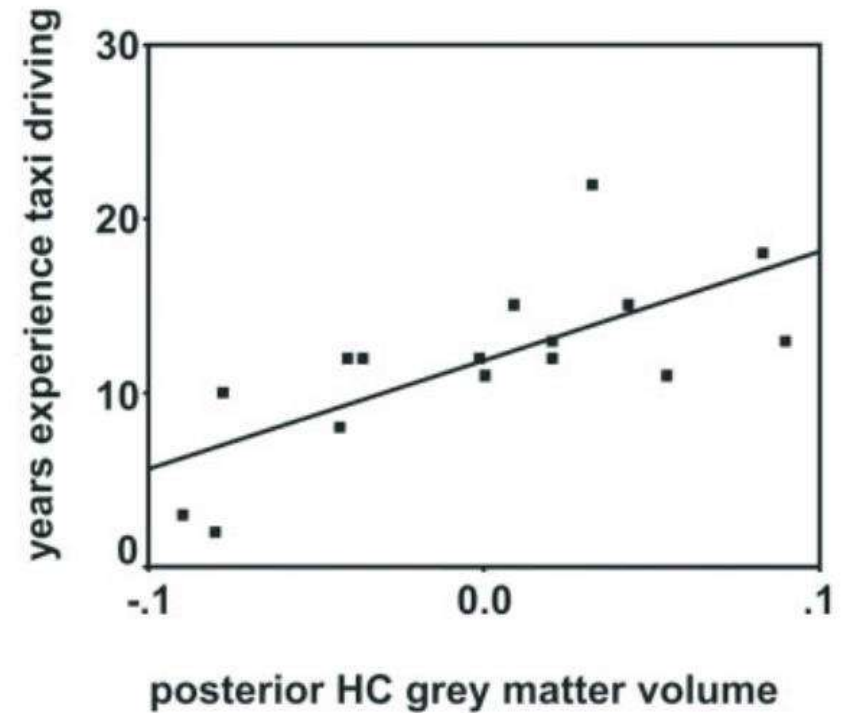
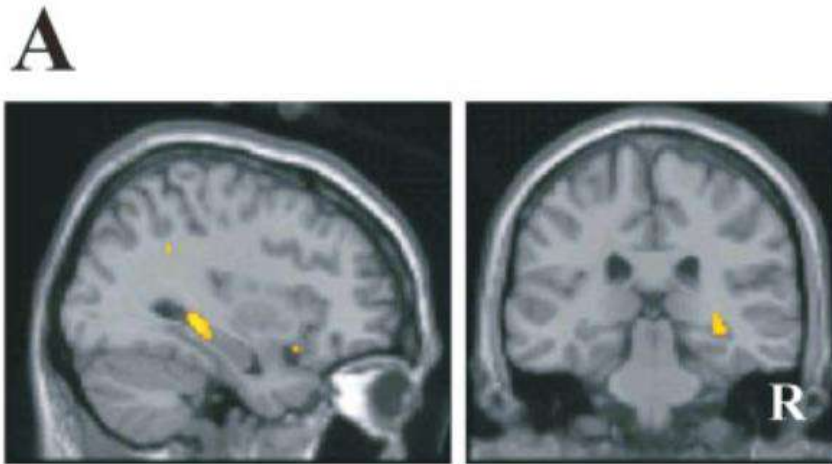
***Neuroplasticity***

***Sculpting our own brain***



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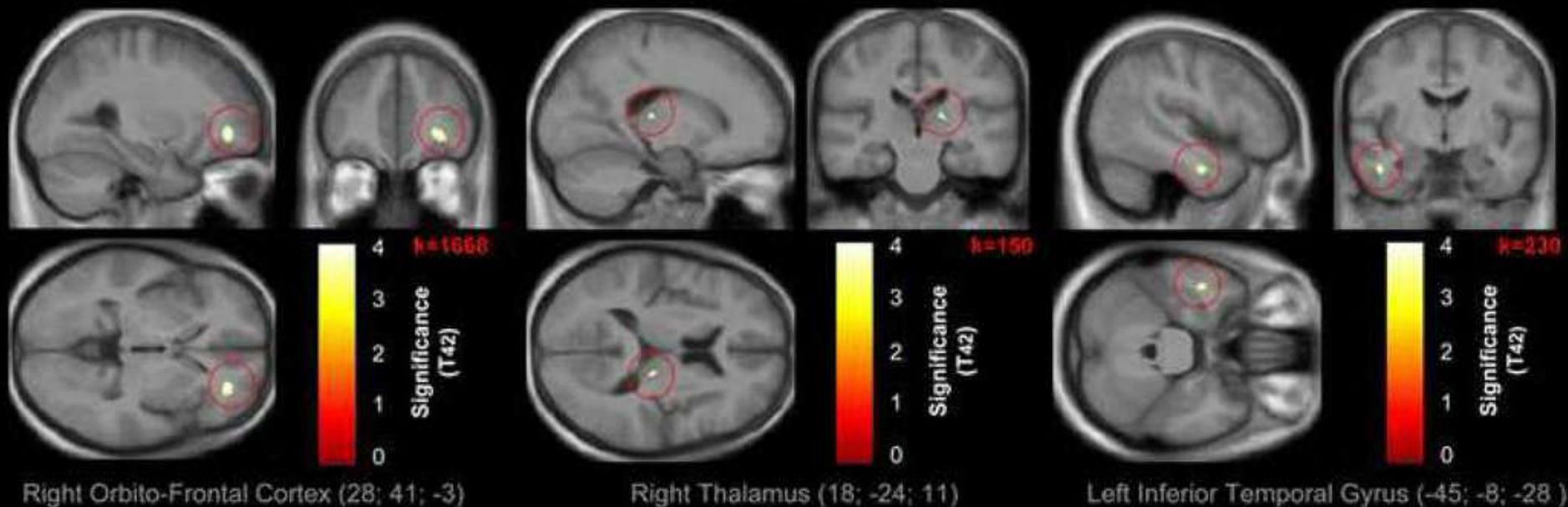
## HIPPOCAMPUS OF LONDON TAXI DRIVERS



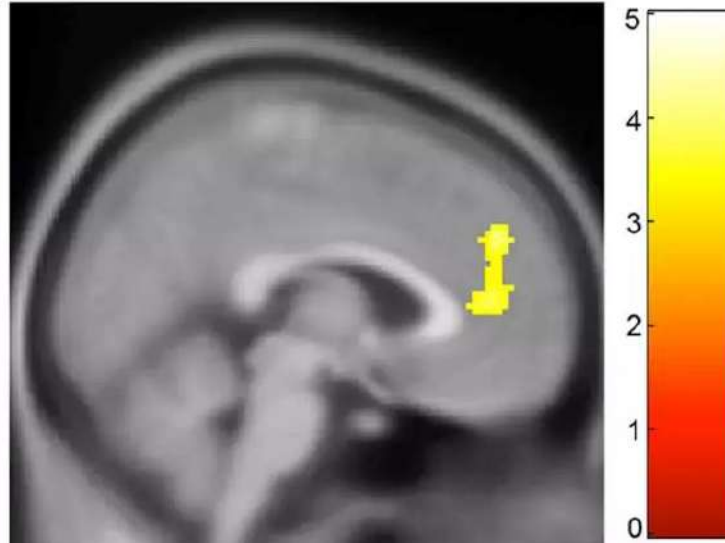
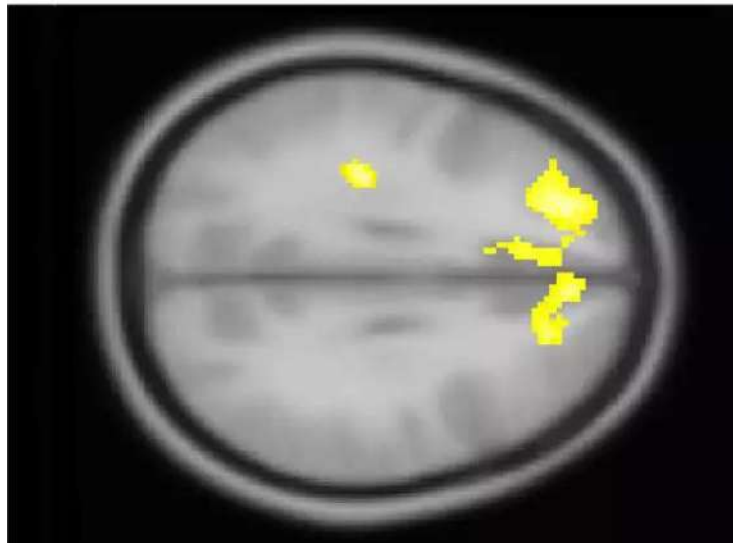
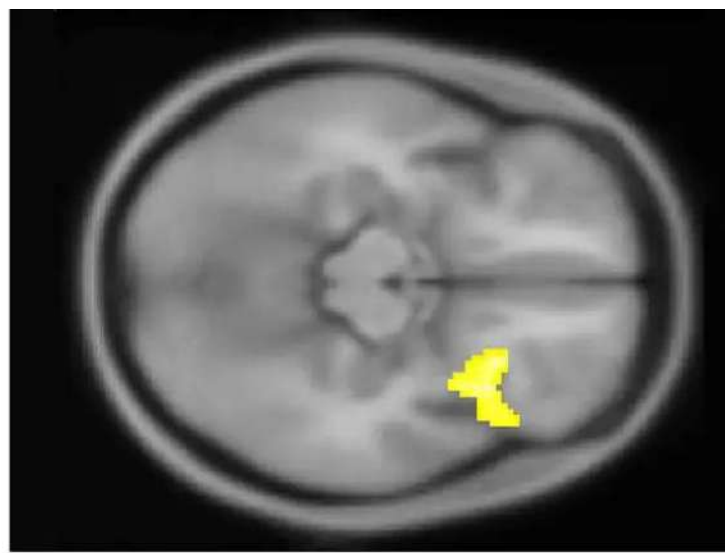
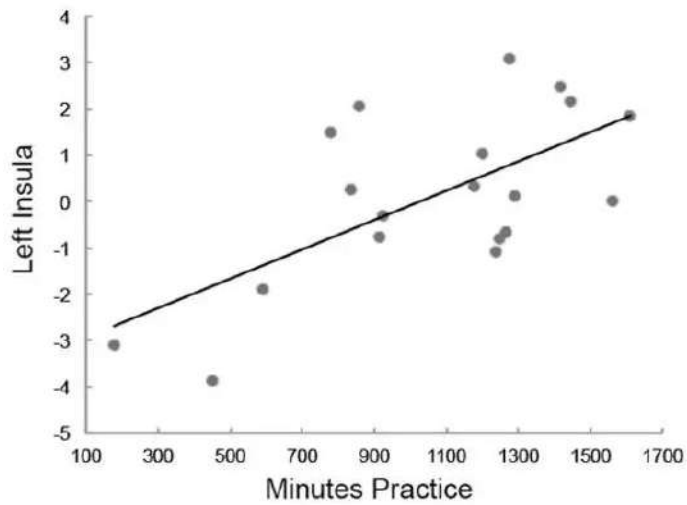
Eleanor A. Maguire, Katherine Woollett, Hugo J. Spiers,  
London taxi drivers and bus drivers: A structural MRI and  
neuropsychological analysis. *Hippocampus*, 16, 12, pp. 1091–1101,  
December 2006

# Neuroplasticity in purely mental functions

Larger Gray Matter Volumes in Meditators







Allen M, Dietz M, Blair KS, van Beek M, Rees G, Vestergaard-Poulsen P, Lutz A, Roepstorff A.

Cognitive-affective neural plasticity following active-controlled mindfulness intervention. *J Neurosci*. 2012 Oct 31;32(44):15601-10.

# Neuroplasticity and physical exercise

- Neuroplasticity can be expanded through physical exercise
- Physical activity promotes the production and release of nerve growth factors in the brain
- This happens particularly in the regions of the brain that mediates executive functions



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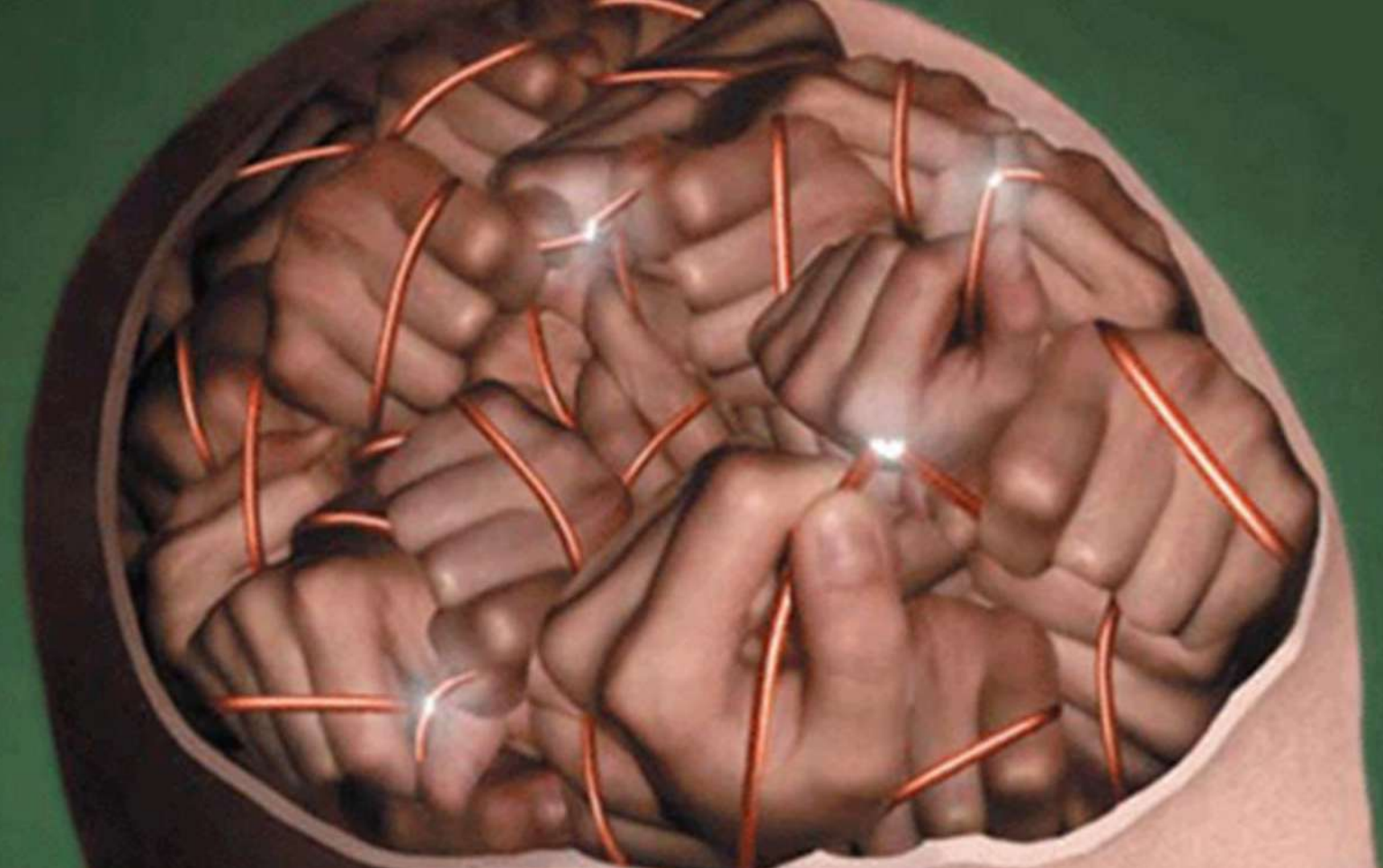


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**Using neuroplasticity for changing**

Because of **neuroplasticity**, biological determinants for impulsiveness, risk-taking and aggressive behaviour can be modulated by specific trainings



# Miopia per il futuro

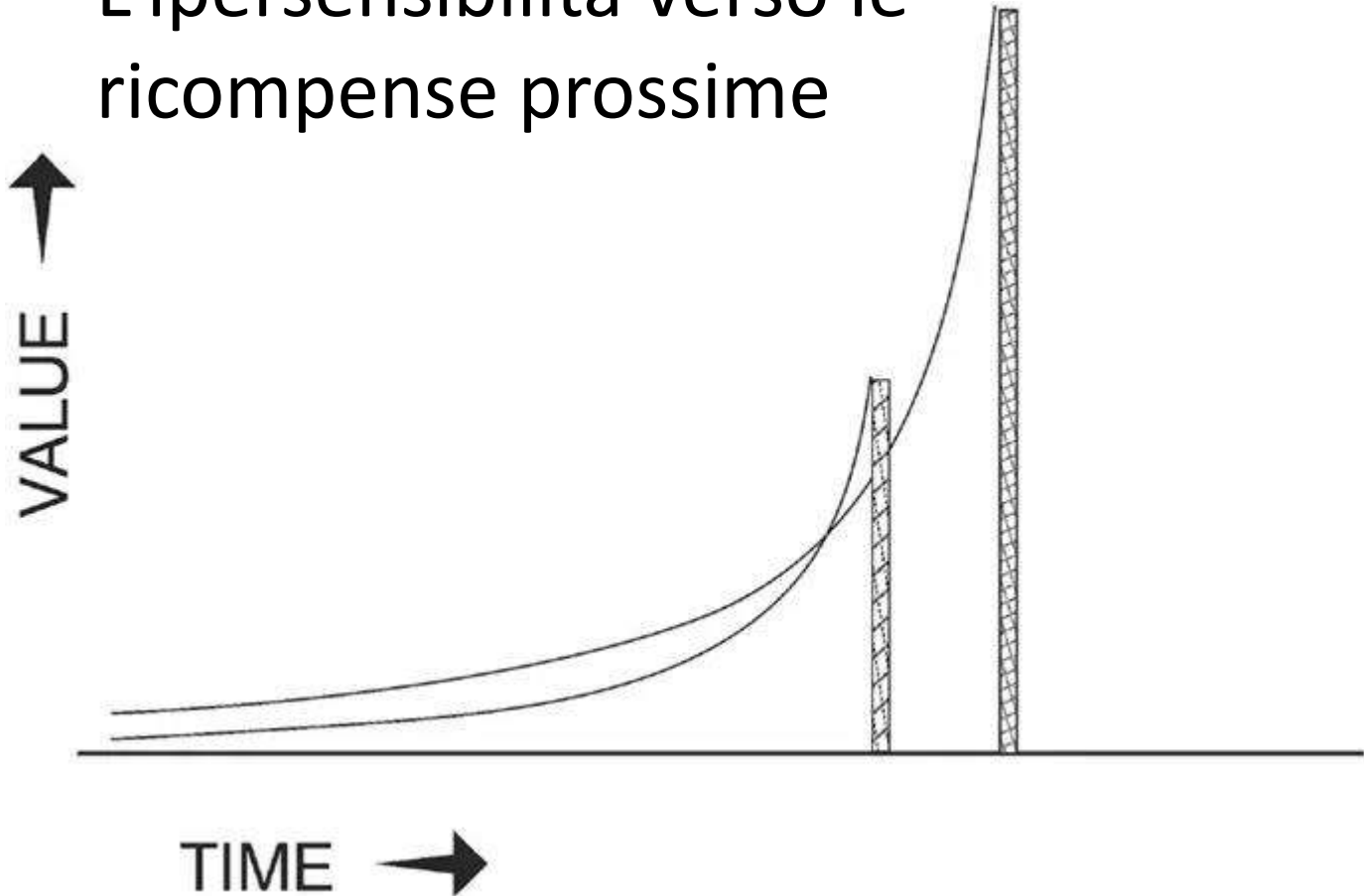


Ipersensibilità verso le  
ricompense presenti



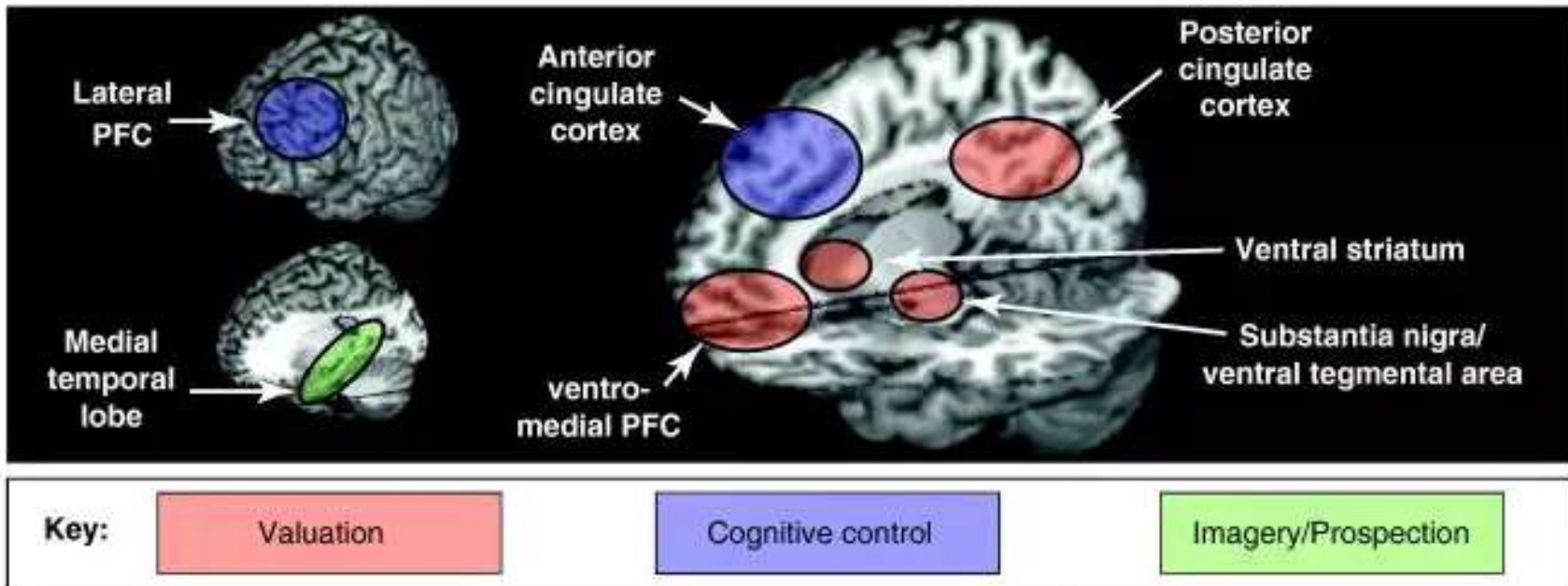
# Le decisioni intertemporali

- Lo sconto del futuro
- L'ipersensibilità verso le ricompense prossime



# Decidere oggi per il nostro io di domani

## le decisioni intertemporali



uno, due, tre o molti?

# sé multipli?



i nostri  
sè futuri sembrano  
altri

siamo uno per  
ogni presente?

**SELF CONTROL IS A LIMITED  
RESOURCE**

Baumeister, R. F. et al. (1998). "Ego depletion: Is the active self to limited resource. Journal of Personality and Social Psychology 74 (5): 1252-1265.

Baumeister, RF. (2002). "Ego Depletion and Self-Control Failure: An Energy Model of the Self's Executive Function". Self and Identity 1 (2): 129–136.



WILLPOWER



EGO DEPLETION

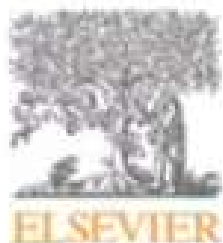
# Self-control and Ego depletion

It is drained by

- Processing perceptions
- Cognitive processes
- Decision making
- Stress
- Regulation of emotions
- Tiredness and lack of sleep
- hunger



# Ego depletion and aggressiveness



Journal of Experimental Social Psychology

Volume 43, Issue 1, January 2007, Pages 62–76



Violence restrained: Effects of self-regulation and its depletion on aggression ☆

C. Nathan DeWall  , Roy F. Baumeister, Tyler F. Stillman, Matthew T. Gailliot

# Training, strengthening Self-control and aggressiveness



# Training Self-control and aggressiveness

Journal of Research in Personality 45 (2011) 252–256



Contents lists available at ScienceDirect

Journal of Research in Personality

journal homepage: [www.elsevier.com/locate/jrp](http://www.elsevier.com/locate/jrp)



Brief Report

## Self-control training decreases aggression in response to provocation in aggressive individuals

Thomas F. Denson<sup>a,\*</sup>, Miriam M. Capper<sup>a</sup>, Megan Oaten<sup>b</sup>, Malte Friese<sup>c</sup>, Timothy P. Schofield<sup>a</sup>

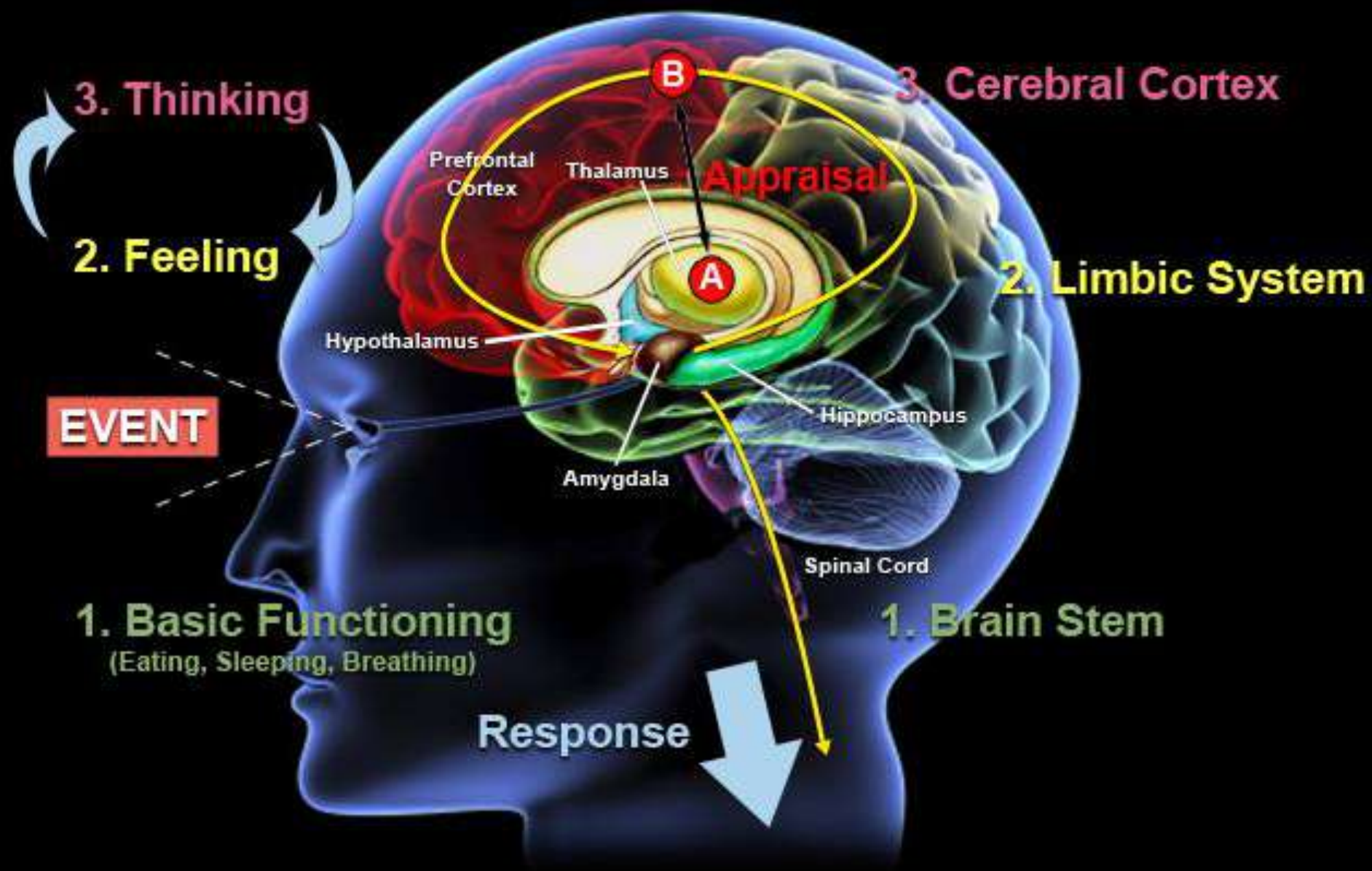
<sup>a</sup> School of Psychology, University of New South Wales, Sydney, Australia

<sup>b</sup> Department of Psychology, Macquarie University, Sydney, Australia

<sup>c</sup> Department of Psychology, University of Basel, Basel, Switzerland

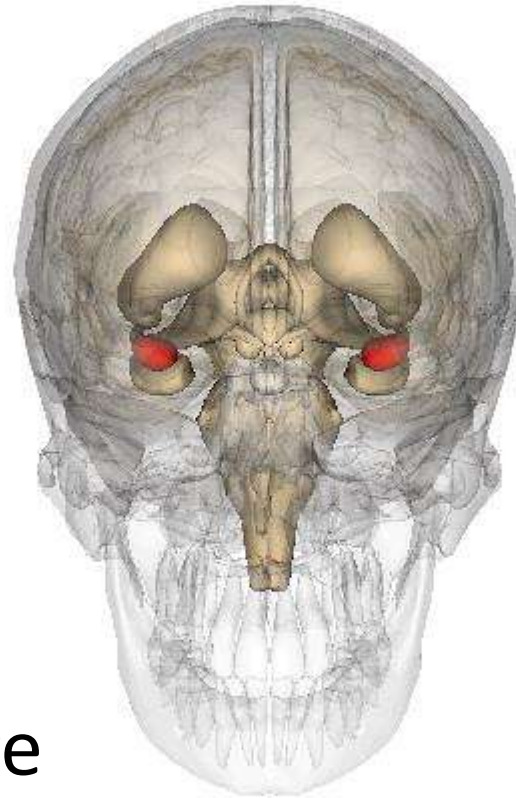


# Emotional Brain



# The Amygdala

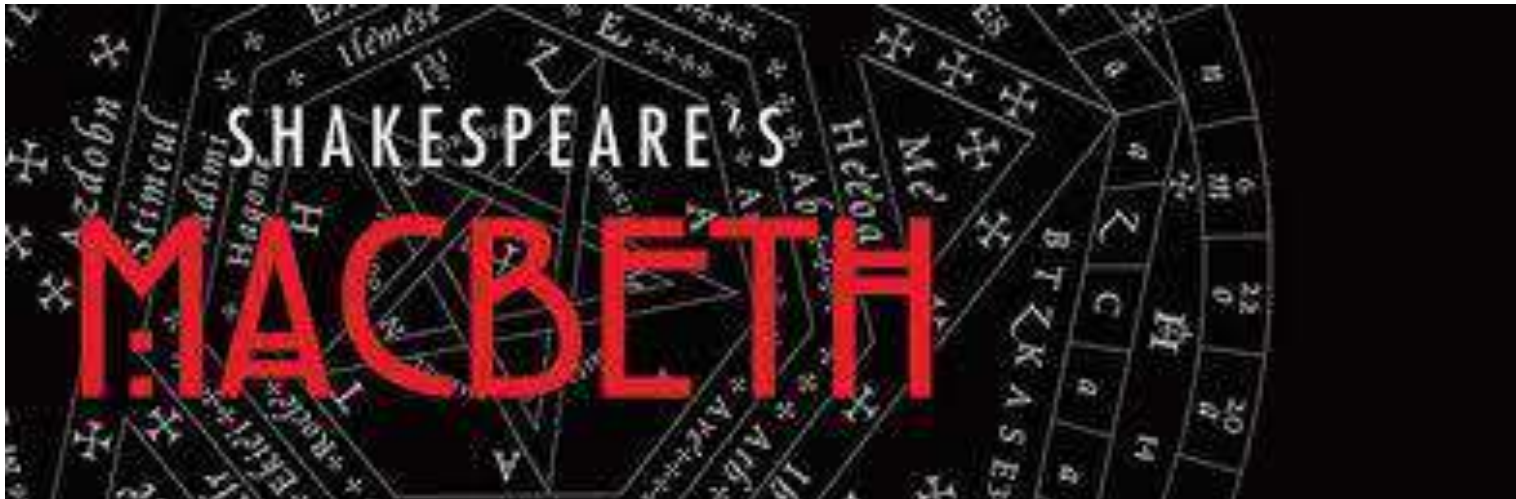
- The main centre of emotional brain
- Highly activated during fear and anger
- Age differences, more active in youngsters
- Gender differences, more active in male



# Putting feelings into words

“What, man! Ne'er pull your hat upon your brows.  
Give sorrow words. The grief that does not speak  
Whispers the o'erfraught heart and bids it break”

Shakespeare, *Macbeth*, Act 4 Scene 3





# Putting feelings into words

- naming the emotion perceived while observing various emotional expressions, the activation of the amygdala decreased compared to when the same photos were simply observed.
- This is particularly evident for anger

**Putting Feelings Into Words : Affect Labeling Disrupts Amygdala Activity in Response to Affective Stimuli**  
Matthew D. Lieberman, Naomi I. Eisenberger, Molly J. Crockett, Sabrina M. Tom, Jennifer H. Pfeifer and Baldwin M. Way  
*Psychological Science* 2007 18: 421

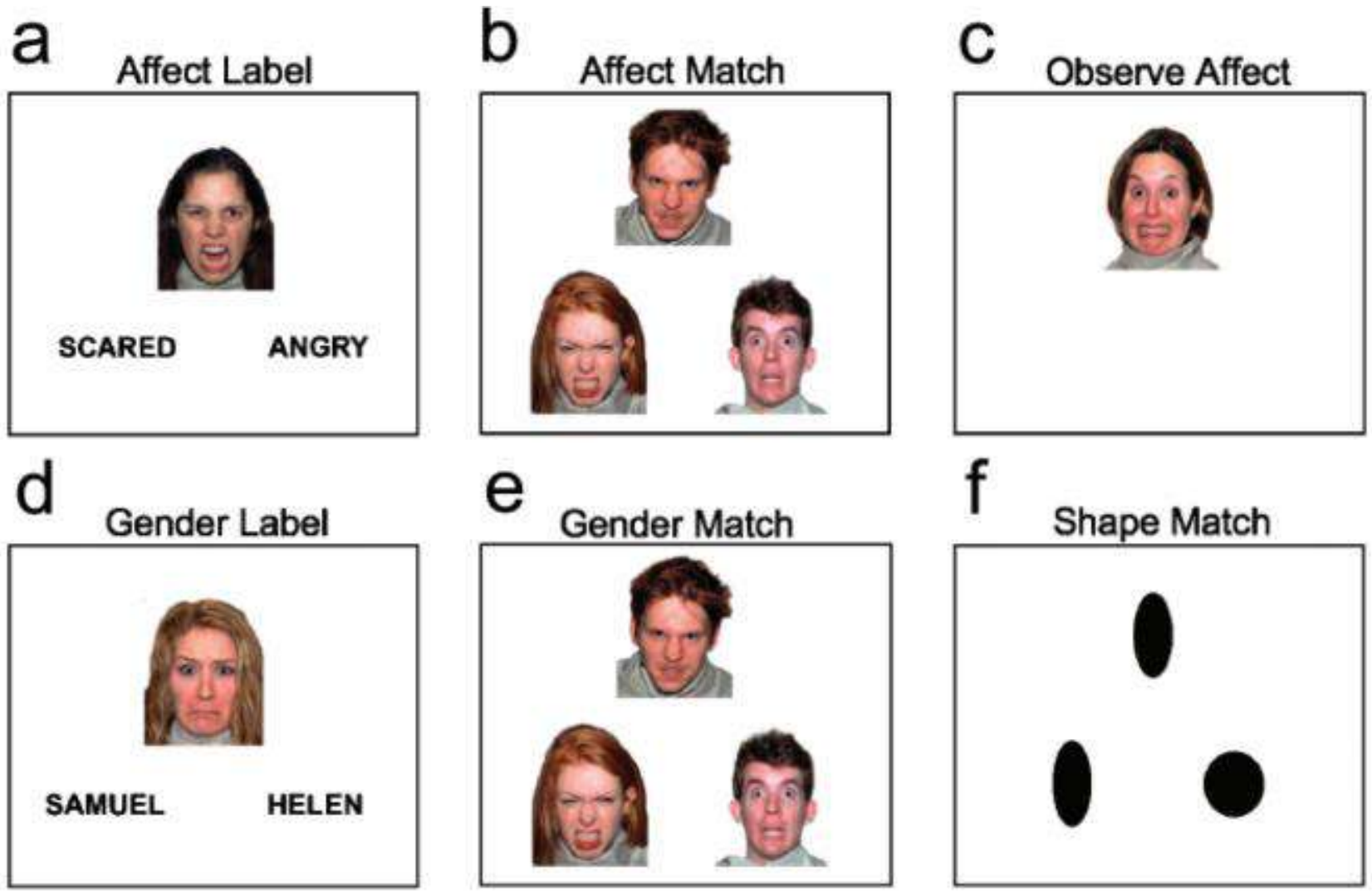


Fig. 1. A sample display from each of the six types of experimental trials.

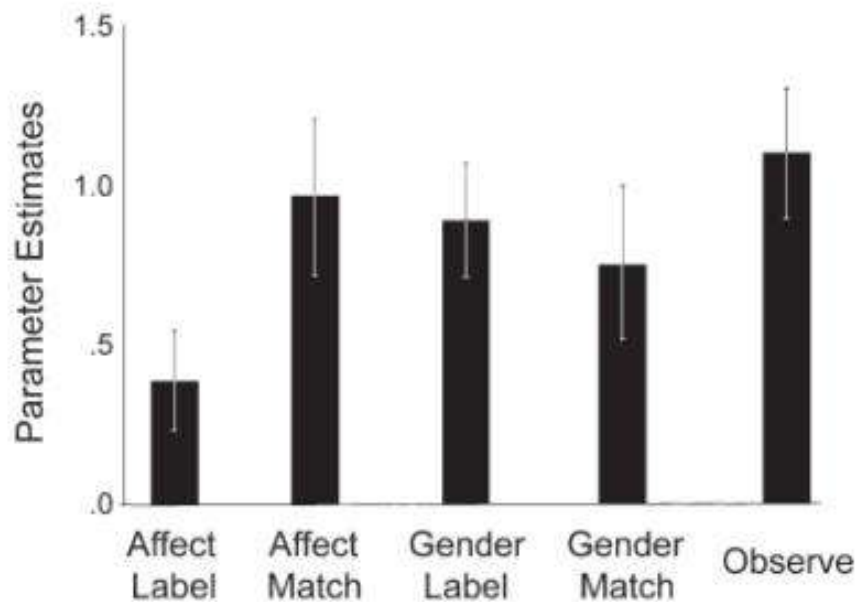
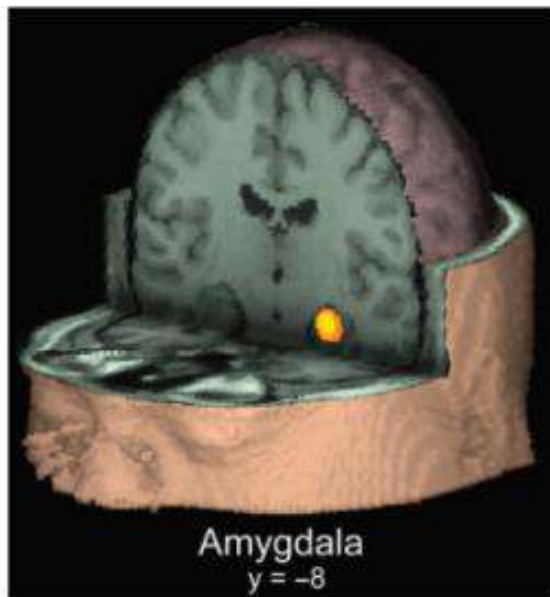
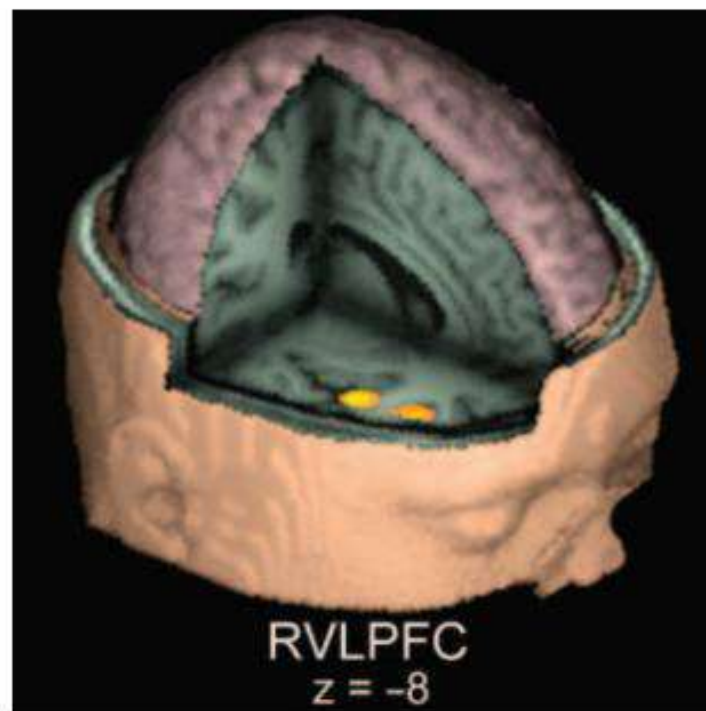


Fig. 2. Parameter estimates of activity during five conditions (relative to activity in the shape-n an amygdala region of interest (ROI). The ROI was identified by comparing activity in the obse in the shape-match condition. The illustration on the left shows an axial slice indicating the ex



# Working with the Emotional lexicon

- A self-assessment of mood states improves mood
- [Lexicon of affective states](#)

<b>Tense</b>	<b>Grouchy</b>	<b>Proud</b>	<b>Muddled</b>	<b>Hesitant</b>
<b>Angry</b>	<b>Blue</b>	<b>Fatigued</b>	<b>Cheerful</b>	<b>Bad-tempered</b>
<b>Worn Out</b>	<b>Energetic</b>	<b>Accepted</b>	<b>Inadequate</b>	<b>Worthless</b>
<b>Unhappy</b>	<b>Isolated</b>	<b>Skeptical</b>	<b>Bitter</b>	<b>Forgetful</b>
<b>Confident</b>	<b>Panicky</b>	<b>Helpful</b>	<b>Loving</b>	<b>Carefree</b>
<b>Lively</b>	<b>Hopeless</b>	<b>Annoyed</b>	<b>Exhausted</b>	<b>Embarrassed</b>
<b>Confused</b>	<b>Jealous</b>	<b>Suspicious</b>	<b>Anxious</b>	<b>Terrified</b>
<b>Amazed</b>	<b>Relaxed</b>	<b>Amused</b>	<b>Gloomy</b>	<b>Guilty</b>
<b>Disillusioned</b>	<b>Resentful</b>	<b>Discouraged</b>	<b>Desperate</b>	<b>Vigorous</b>
<b>Sorry for things done</b>	<b>Grateful</b>	<b>Resentful</b>	<b>Sluggish</b>	<b>Threatened</b>
<b>Listless</b>	<b>Unworthy</b>	<b>Empathetic</b>	<b>Rebellious</b>	<b>Bushed</b>
<b>Peeved</b>	<b>Perplexed</b>	<b>Vulnerable</b>	<b>Helpless</b>	<b>Exuberant</b>
<b>Disappointed</b>	<b>Spiteful</b>	<b>Nervous</b>	<b>Weary</b>	<b>Recalcitrant</b>
<b>Sad</b>	<b>Rejected</b>	<b>Ashamed</b>	<b>Alert</b>	<b>Selfish</b>
<b>Active</b>	<b>Sympathetic</b>	<b>Lonely</b>	<b>Deceived</b>	<b>Determinate</b>
<b>Humiliated</b>	<b>Uneasy</b>	<b>Kind</b>	<b>Furious</b>	<b>Exalted</b>
<b>Compassionate</b>	<b>Restless</b>	<b>Miserable</b>	<b>Disgusted</b>	<b>Purposeless</b>
<b>On edge</b>	<b>Remorseful</b>	<b>Coraqueous</b>	<b>Trusting</b>	<b>Enthusiastic</b>

# EmotionMeter

## Come ti senti?

Trova l'emozione più appropriata per rappresentare il tuo stato d'animo. Riceverai il feedback delle emozioni della settimana. Imparerai alcuni esercizi su come regolare le tue emozioni per inibire comportamenti impulsivo.

Nome utente

Password

Accesso

# Smartphone App

## Fai il tuo check-in!

Come ti senti?



Gioia



Fiducia



Paura



Sorpresa



Tristezza



Disgusto



Rabbia



Aspettativa





## Terrore

*Mi sento così quando: quando provo un sentimento o mi trovo in uno stato di forte paura o di vivo sgomento*

## Ansia

*Mi sento così quando: quando provo uno stato di agitazione, di forte apprensione dovuto a timore, incertezza nell'attesa di qualcosa*

## Paura

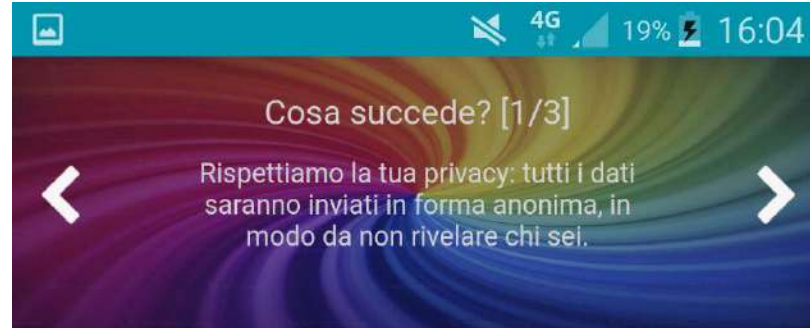
*Mi sento così quando: penso che possa capitarmi qualcosa di male*

## Insicurezza

*Mi sento insicuro quando la mancanza di punti di riferimento produce tensione o disagio di fronte ad un pericolo reale o immaginario o dinanzi a qualcosa che temo possa succedere*

## Preoccupazione

*mi sento così quando: sono in uno stato di incertezza, apprensione per qualcosa che ho paura potrebbe accadere in futuro.*



## Dove ti trovi?

- A casa
- Nel convitto
- Con i miei amici
- A scuola
- In giro per la città
- Da qualche altra parte

## Con chi sei?

- Con gli amici
- Con i miei compagni di classe
- Da solo
- Con la mia famiglia
- Con qualcun altro

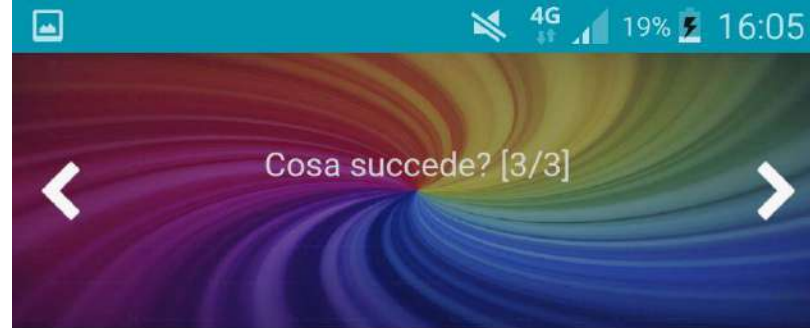




Dove senti l'emozione nel tuo corpo?



- Testa
- Gambe
- Voce
- Pancia
- Collo
- Mani
- Cuore
- Gola
- Pelle
- Spalle
- Piedi
- Altrove



Com'è il tuo respiro?

- Mi sembra di non poter respirare
- Il mio respiro è corto
- Sono senza fiato
- Respiro regolarmente
- Qualcos'altro

Se dovessi fare una di queste attività, quale preferiresti?

- Correre
- Preferisco stare da solo
- Chiamo un amico
- Mangiare
- Riposare
- Uscire all'aperto
- Parlare con qualcuno che ne sa più di me
- Non fare niente
- Qualcos'altro

# Lo strumento: la app



23:31



**Il tuo profilo**

**Età** 31

**Sesso**  Maschio  
 Femmina

**Provincia** Trieste

**Sei uno studente?**  Sì  
 No



23:31

**Sei un lavoratore?**  Sì  
 No

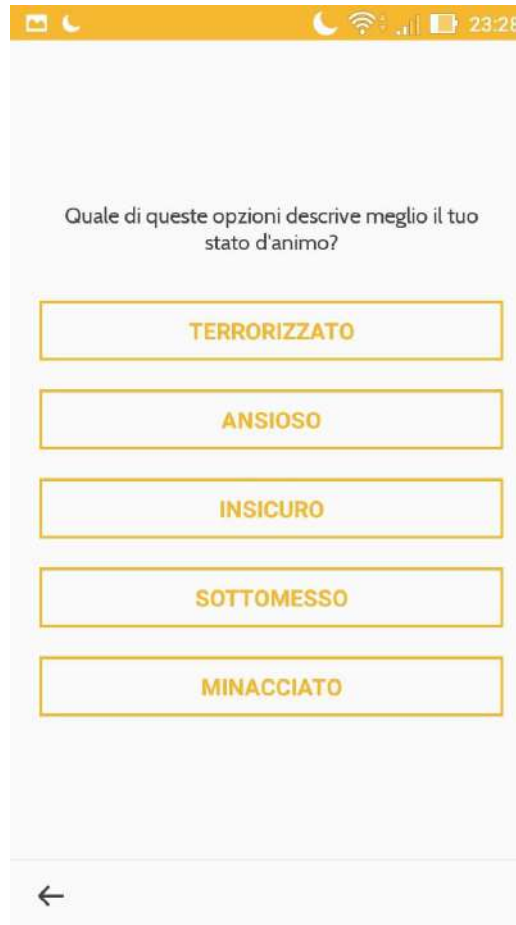
**Il comune in cui vivi**  Ha meno di 1000 abitanti  
 Ha tra 1000 e 5000 abitanti  
 ha tra 5.000 e 25.000 abitanti  
 ha tra 25.000 e 100.000 abitanti  
 ha più di 100.000 abitanti

 **Salva profilo**

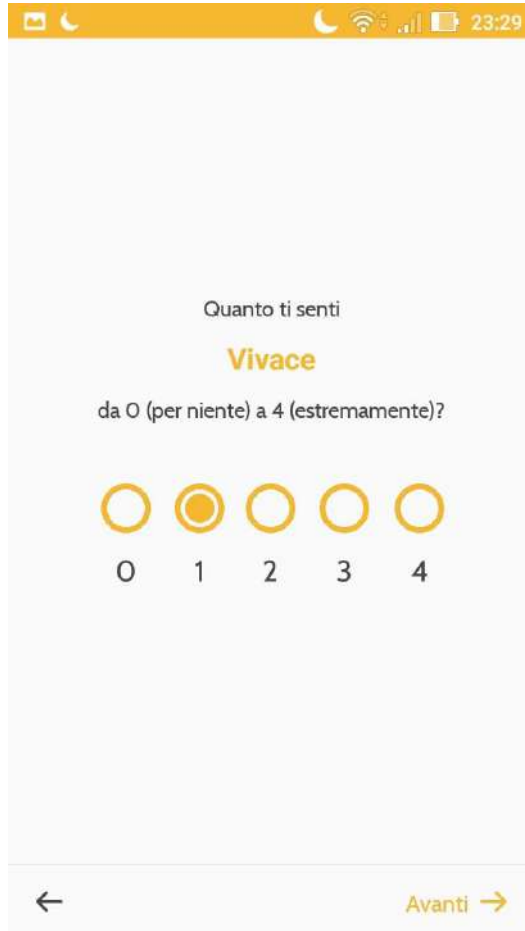
 **Modifica password**

# La app: stato emotivo prevalente



# La app: Profile Of Mood State (POMS)



Quanto ti senti

**Vivace**

da 0 (per niente) a 4 (estremamente)?

0 1 2 3 4

← Avanti →

This screenshot shows the 'Vivace' mood state rating screen. The title 'Vivace' is in bold orange text. Below it, a rating scale from 0 to 4 is shown with five orange circles. The circle for '1' is filled with orange, indicating the selected rating. At the bottom, there is a back arrow on the left and an 'Avanti' button with a right arrow on the right.



Quanto ti senti

**Confuso**

da 0 (per niente) a 4 (estremamente)?

0 1 2 3 4

← Avanti →

This screenshot shows the 'Confuso' mood state rating screen. The title 'Confuso' is in bold orange text. Below it, a rating scale from 0 to 4 is shown with five orange circles. The circle for '3' is filled with orange, indicating the selected rating. At the bottom, there is a back arrow on the left and an 'Avanti' button with a right arrow on the right.

# La app: contestualizzazione

23:30

Dove ti trovi?

- a casa
- a scuola
- in giro per la città/paese
- in viaggio
- da qualche altra parte

←

23:30

Con chi sei?

- da solo
- con amici
- con compagni di classe
- con compagni di squadra/  
gruppo musicale/coro
- con la mia famiglia
- con qualcun altro

← Avanti →

23:30

Se potessi fare una di queste attività, cosa faresti?

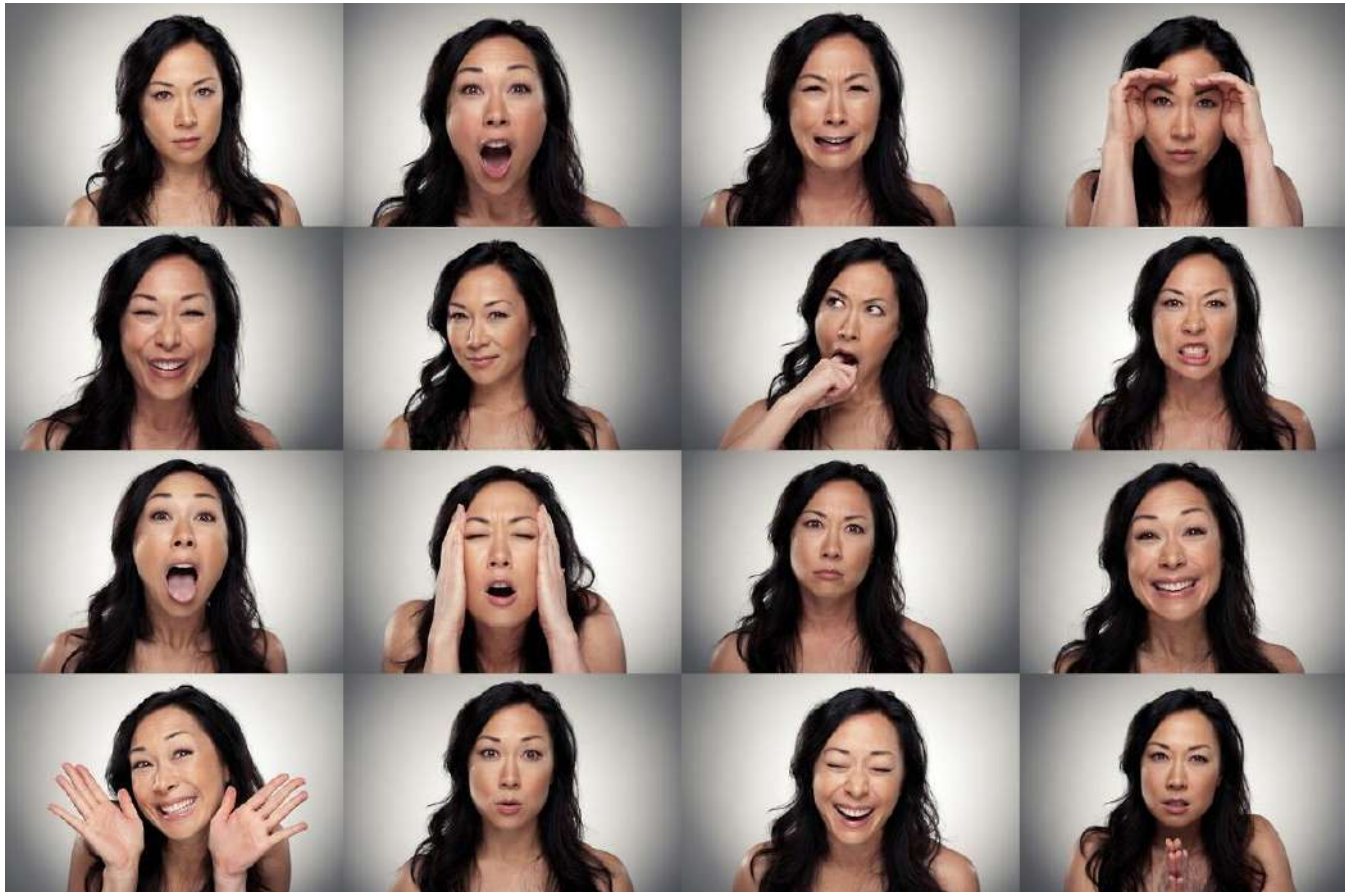
- correre
- mangiare
- stare da solo
- chiamare un amico
- riposare
- uscire all'aperto
- parlare con qualcuno che  
ne sa più di me
- non fare niente

← Avanti →

# Emozioni in regola

Progetto di ricerca/azione

SISSA – ASUITS – AAS3 – dipartimento di  
prevenzione FVG





# The intervention programme

- 10 different sessions of activities
- Each session includes, some brain-based teachings, contemplative practice (mindfulness)

# **MEDITATION AND MINDFULNESS**

**The root of Self-control is Self-awareness**



## A Wandering Mind Is an Unhappy Mind

Matthew A. Killingsworth\* and Daniel T. Gilbert

Unlike other animals, human beings spend a lot of time thinking about what is not going on around them, contemplating events that happened in the past, might happen

more of 22 activities adapted from the day reconstruction method (10, 11), and a mind-wandering question (“Are you thinking about anything other than what you’re currently doing?”) answered

including the least enjoyable. Although people’s minds were more likely to wander to pleasant topics (42.5% of samples) than to unpleasant topics (26.5% of samples) or neutral topics (31% of samples), people were no happier when thinking about pleasant topics than about their current activity ( $b = -0.52$ , not significant) and were considerably unhappier when thinking about neutral topics ( $b = -7.2$ ,  $P < 0.001$ ) or unpleasant topics ( $b = -23.9$ ,  $P < 0.001$ ) than about their current activity (Fig. 1, bottom). Although negative moods are known

# A Wandering Mind Is an Unhappy Mind

Matthew A. Killingsworth\* and Daniel T. Gilbert

Unlike other animals, human beings spend a lot of time thinking about what is not going on around them, contemplating events that happened in the past, might happen in the future, or will never happen at all. Indeed, “stimulus-independent thought” or “mind wandering” appears to be the brain’s default mode of operation (1–3). Although this ability is a remarkable evolutionary achievement that allows people to learn, reason, and plan, it may have an emotional cost. Many philosophical and religious traditions teach that happiness is to be found by living in the moment, and practitioners are trained to resist mind wandering and “to be here now.” These traditions suggest that a wandering mind is an unhappy mind. Are they right?

Laboratory experiments have revealed a great deal about the cognitive and neural bases of mind wandering (3–7), but little about its emotional consequences in everyday life. The most reliable method for investigating real-world emotion is experience sampling, which involves contacting people as they engage in their everyday activities and asking them to report their thoughts, feelings, and actions at that moment. Unfortunately, collecting real-time reports from large numbers of people as they go about their daily lives is so cumbersome and expensive that experience sampling has rarely been used to investigate the relationship between mind wandering and happiness and has always been limited to very small samples (8, 9).

We solved this problem by developing a Web application for the iPhone (Apple Incorporated, Cupertino, California), which we used to create an unusually large database of real-time reports of thoughts, feelings, and actions of a broad range of people as they went about their daily activities. The application contacts participants through their iPhones at random moments during their waking hours, presents them with questions, and records their answers to a database at [www.trackyourhappiness.org](http://www.trackyourhappiness.org). The database currently contains nearly a quarter of a million samples from about 5000 people from 83 different countries who range in age from 18 to 88 and who collectively represent every one of 86 major occupational categories.

To find out how often people’s minds wander, what topics they wander to, and how those wanderings affect their happiness, we analyzed samples from 2250 adults (58.8% male, 73.9% residing in the United States, mean age of 34 years) who were randomly assigned to answer a happiness question (“How are you feeling right now?”) answered on a continuous sliding scale from very bad (0) to very good (100), an activity question (“What are you doing right now?”) answered by endorsing one or

more of 22 activities adapted from the day reconstruction method (10, 11), and a mind-wandering question (“Are you thinking about something other than what you’re currently doing?”) answered with one of four options: no, yes, something pleasant; yes, something neutral; or yes, something unpleasant. Our analyses revealed three facts.

First, people’s minds wandered frequently, regardless of what they were doing. Mind wandering occurred in 46.9% of the samples and in at least 30% of the samples taken during every activity except making love. The frequency of mind wandering in our real-world sample was considerably higher than is typically seen in laboratory experiments. Surprisingly, the nature of people’s activities had only a modest impact on whether their minds wandered and had almost no impact on the pleasantness of the topics to which their minds wandered (12).

Second, multilevel regression revealed that people were less happy when their minds were wandering than when they were not [slope ( $b$ ) = -8.79,  $P < 0.001$ ], and this was true during all activities,



**Fig. 1.** Mean happiness reported during each activity (top) and while mind wandering to unpleasant topics, neutral topics, pleasant topics or not mind wandering (bottom). Dashed line indicates mean of happiness across all samples. Bubble area indicates the frequency of occurrence. The largest bubble (“not mind wandering”) corresponds to 53.1% of the samples, and the smallest bubble (“praying/worshipping/meditating”) corresponds to 0.1% of the samples.

including the least enjoyable. Although people’s minds were more likely to wander to pleasant topics (42.5% of samples) than to unpleasant topics (26.5% of samples) or neutral topics (31% of samples), people were no happier when thinking about pleasant topics than about their current activity ( $b = -0.52$ , not significant) and were considerably unhappier when thinking about neutral topics ( $b = -7.2$ ,  $P < 0.001$ ) or unpleasant topics ( $b = -23.9$ ,  $P < 0.001$ ) than about their current activity (Fig. 1, bottom). Although negative moods are known to cause mind wandering (13), time-lag analyses strongly suggested that mind wandering in our sample was generally the cause, and not merely the consequence, of unhappiness (12).

Third, what people were thinking was a better predictor of their happiness than was what they were doing. The nature of people’s activities explained 4.6% of the within-person variance in happiness and 3.2% of the between-person variance in happiness, but mind wandering explained 10.8% of within-person variance in happiness and 17.7% of between-person variance in happiness. The variance explained by mind wandering was largely independent of the variance explained by the nature of activities, suggesting that the two were independent influences on happiness.

In conclusion, a human mind is a wandering mind, and a wandering mind is an unhappy mind. The ability to think about what is not happening is a cognitive achievement that comes at an emotional cost.

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- We thank V. Piliyanavath for engineering [www.trackyourhappiness.org](http://www.trackyourhappiness.org) and R. Hackman, A. Jenkins, W. Mendes, A. Oswald, and T. Wilson for helpful comments.

## Supporting Online Material

[www.sciencemag.org/cgi/content/full/113/6006/932/DC1](http://www.sciencemag.org/cgi/content/full/113/6006/932/DC1)

Materials and Methods

Table S1

References

18 May 2010; accepted 29 September 2010

10.1126/Science.1192439

Harvard University, Cambridge, MA 02138, USA.

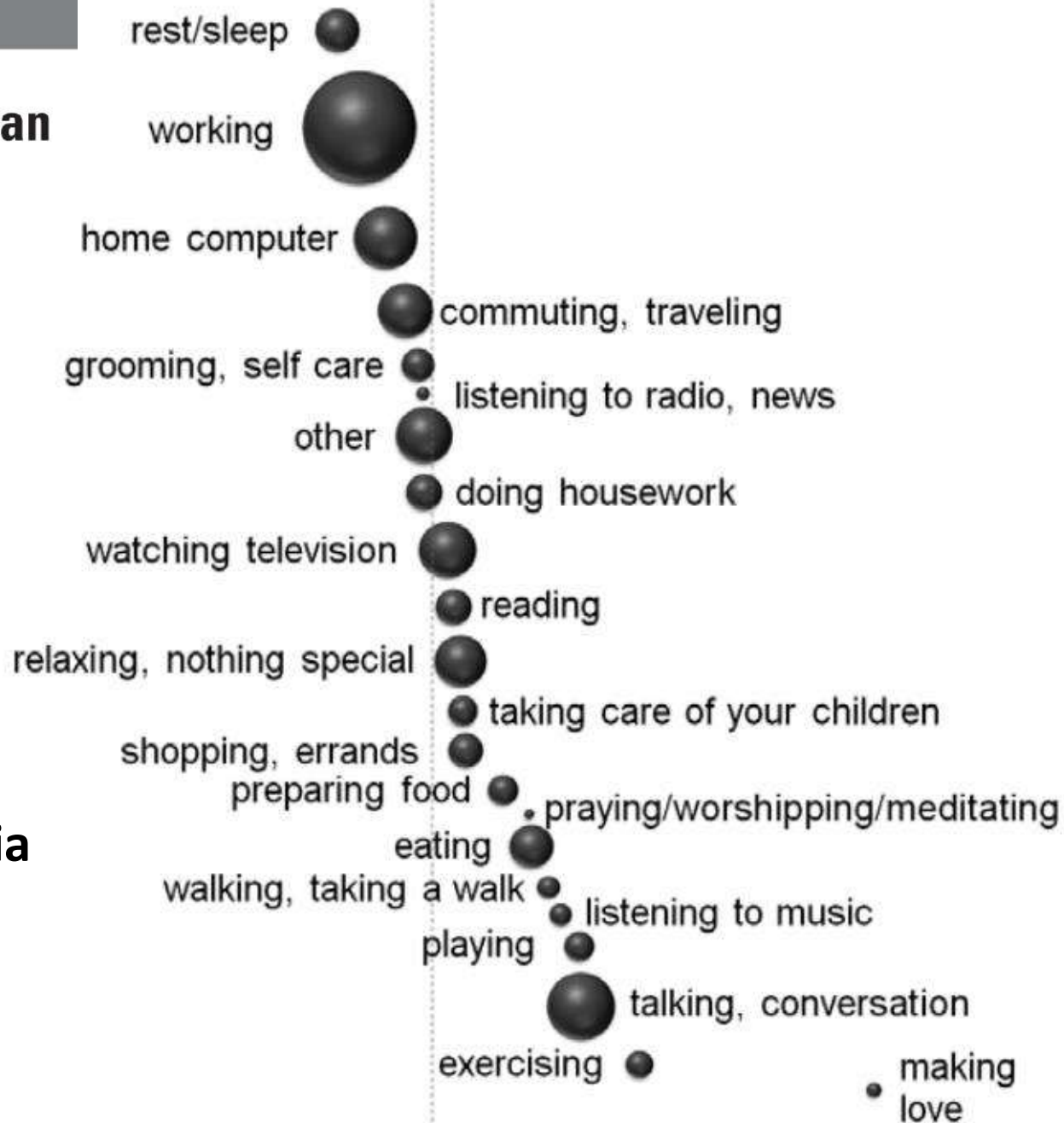
\*To whom correspondence should be addressed. E-mail: [mkillings@fas.harvard.edu](mailto:mkillings@fas.harvard.edu)

# A wandering mind is an unhappy mind

# A Wandering Mind Is an Unhappy Mind

Matthew A. Killingsworth\* and Daniel T. Gilbert

**Infelicità media  
riportata per  
ogni attività**

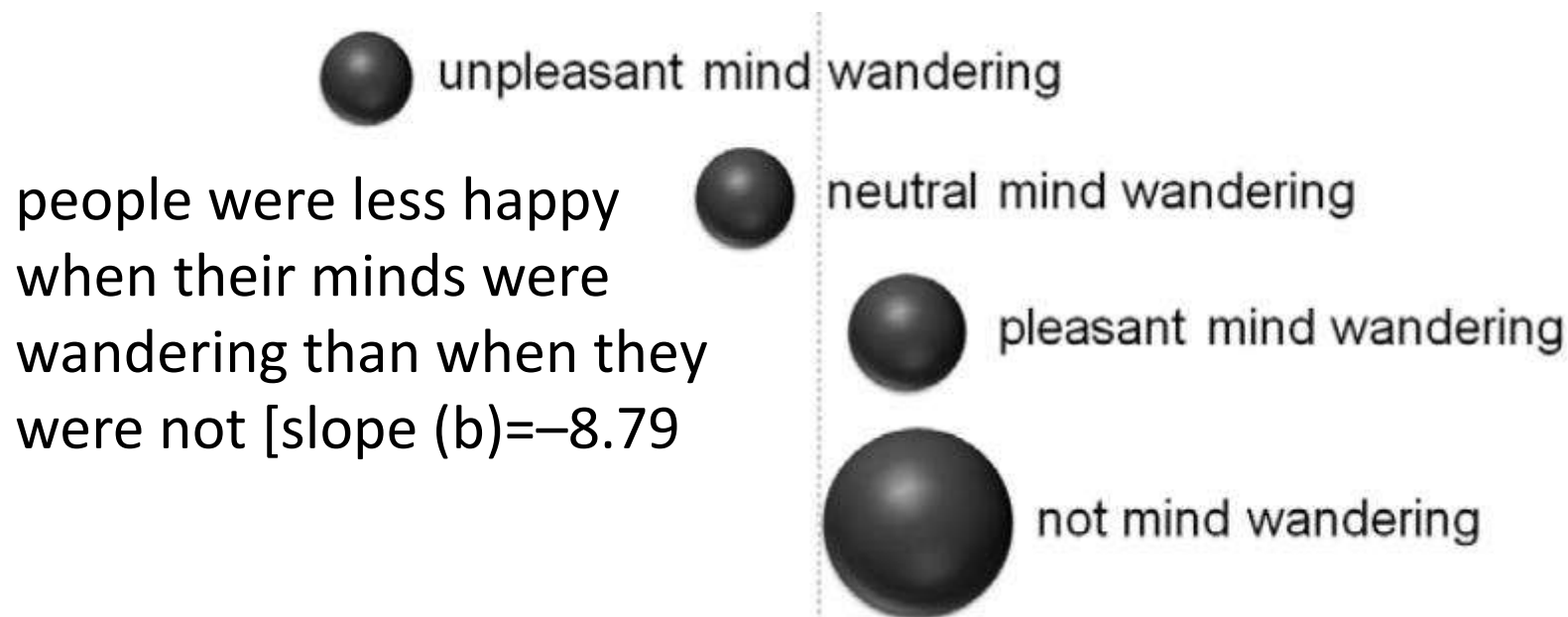




## A Wandering Mind Is an Unhappy Mind

Matthew A. Killingsworth\* and Daniel T. Gilbert

Mind wandering occurred in 46.9%



people were no happier when thinking about pleasant topics than about their current activity ( $b=-0.52$ , not significant) and were considerably unhappier when thinking about neutral topics ( $b=-7.2, P < 0.001$ ) or unpleasant topics ( $b=-23.9, P < 0.001$ ) than about their current activity

# Many types of meditation

- Mindfulness
- Metta – loving kindness
- Analytic meditation
- Compassion meditation
- Standing and walking meditation
- Purifying meditation

**A common trait:** training attention and awareness, non judgemental observation of mental contents and processes

# Promoting the ability to control behaviour, emotions and impulsiveness



# Mindfulness

- From the Pali term (the Indian language of the first Buddhist writings) “sati”: awareness, attention, memory.
  - 1) “self-regulation of attention” (maintained on the immediate experience);
  - 2) “attitudinal orientation” (curiosity, openness, acceptance);
  - 3) “Intention: constantly “remembered” voluntary control”

# Mindfulness

- Mental training that develops metacognition and awareness,
- Metacognition is the observation of mental dynamics and contents from a detached perspective.
- This is the precondition for controlling mental processes and particularly the emotions and impulsiveness.
- **Mindfulness is a training exercise in the ability to respond to stimuli in a reflective way rather than by reflex.**



# Social Cognitive and Affective Neuroscience

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## **Mindful attention reduces neural and self-reported cue-induced craving in smokers**

[Cecilia Westbrook<sup>1</sup>](#), [John David Creswell<sup>2</sup>](#), [Golnaz Tabibnia<sup>2</sup>](#), [Erica Julson<sup>2</sup>](#), [Hedy Kober<sup>3</sup>](#) and [Hilary A. Tindle<sup>4</sup>](#)



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# Mindfulness and the presence in the moment

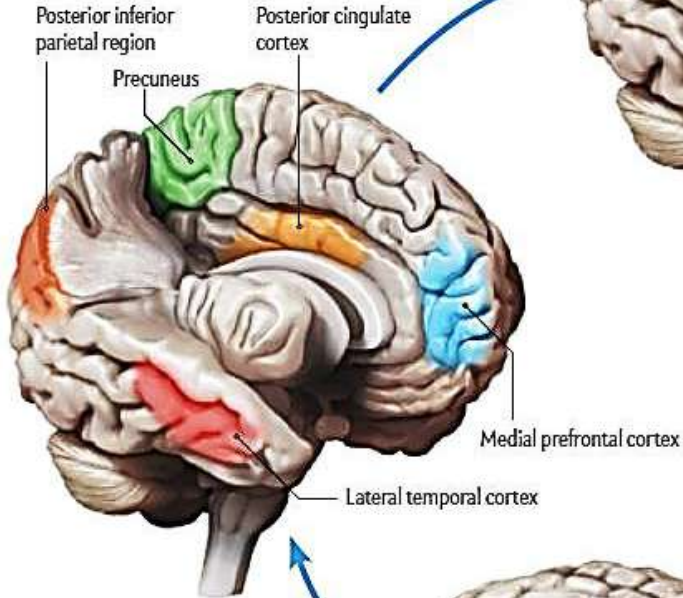
- We are generally absent, transported by an inner monologue separate from the present, many other time our behaviour is controlled by environmental stimuli
- We are driven by impulses and unable to control our behaviour

# Living the present unconsciously and its consequences

- Unawareness of the appetites and of the signals from the brain centres that codify emotional and impulsive reactions and habits
- Inability of recognizing our mood
- Inability to properly recognize other's emotions
- Unawareness of the “natural” pleasure

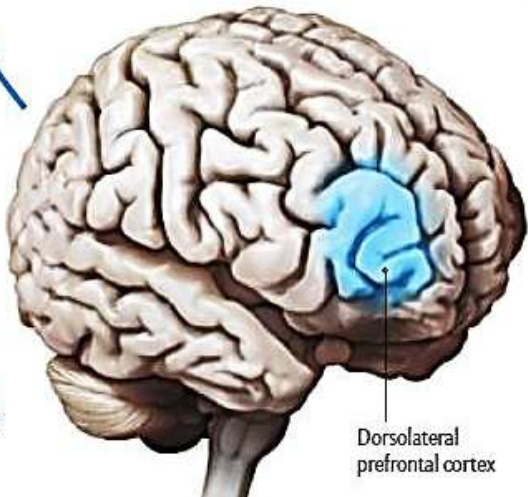
### 1 Mind Wandering

Imaging of a meditator in the scanner illuminates the posterior cingulate cortex, the precuneus and other areas that are part of the default-mode network, which stays active when thoughts begin to stray.

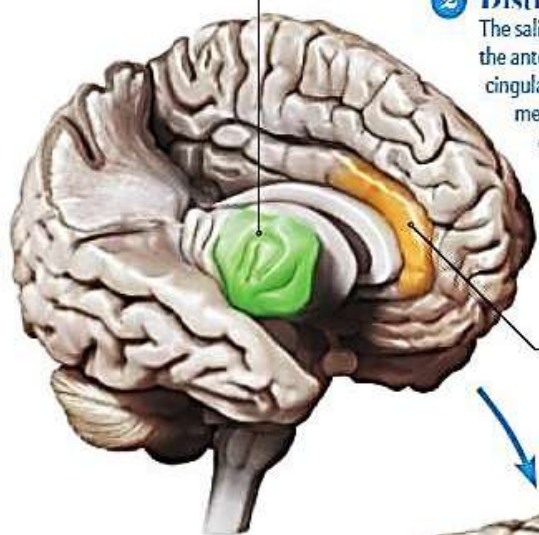


### 4 Sustaining Focus

The dorsolateral prefrontal cortex stays active when the meditator directs attention on the breath for long periods.



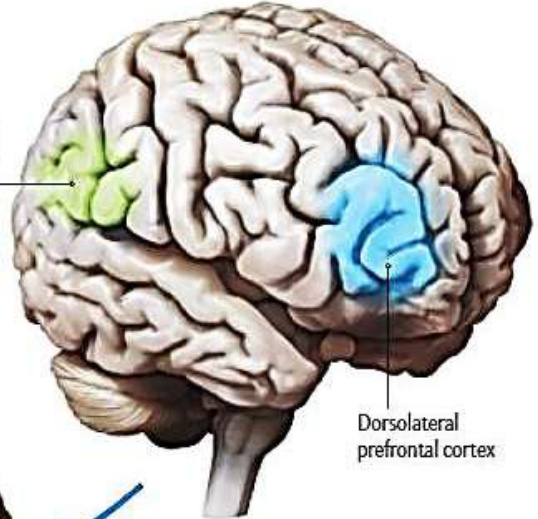
### Anterior insula



### 2 Distraction Awareness

The salience network, which includes the anterior insula and the anterior cingulate cortex, underlies the meditator's awareness of the distraction. Once cognizant that the mind has roved, the volunteer pushes a button to let researchers know what happened.

### Inferior parietal lobe



### 3 Reorientation of Awareness

Two brain areas—the dorsolateral prefrontal cortex and the inferior parietal lobe—are among those that help to disengage attention from a distraction to refocus on the rhythm of the inhalations and exhalations.

# Mindfulness, meditation and neuroplasticity

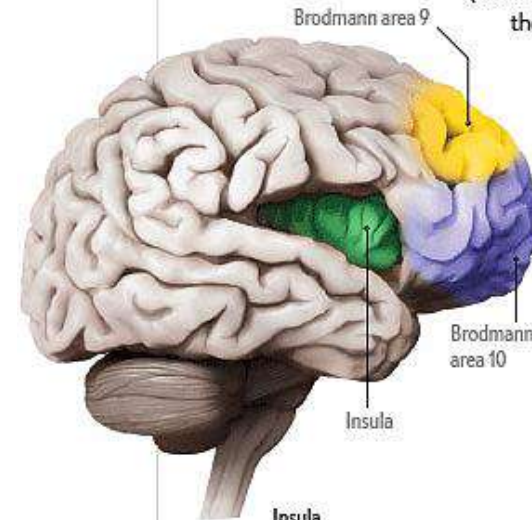


# Thickening of prefrontal cortex

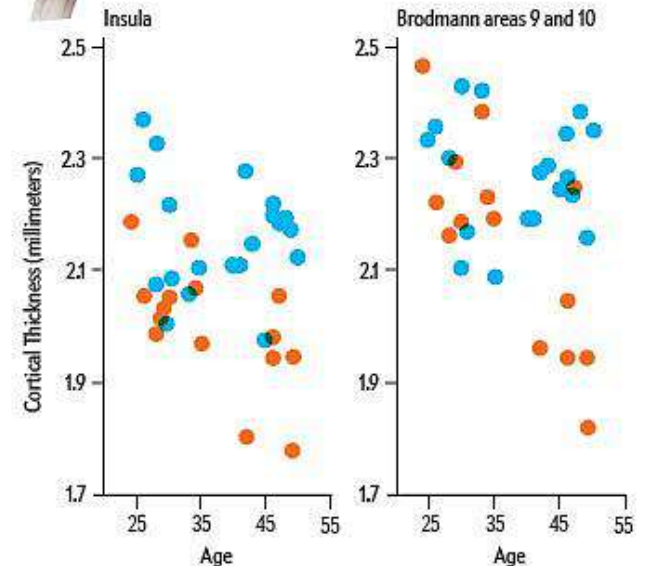
## Grow More Brain

Researchers from several universities explored whether meditation might bring about structural changes in brain tissue. Using magnetic resonance imaging, they found that 20 experienced practitioners of one type of Buddhist meditation had a greater volume of brain tissue in the prefrontal cortex

(Brodmann areas 9 and 10) and the insula than a control group did (graphs). These regions play a role in processing attention, sensory information and internal bodily sensations. Future long-term studies will be needed to confirm this finding.

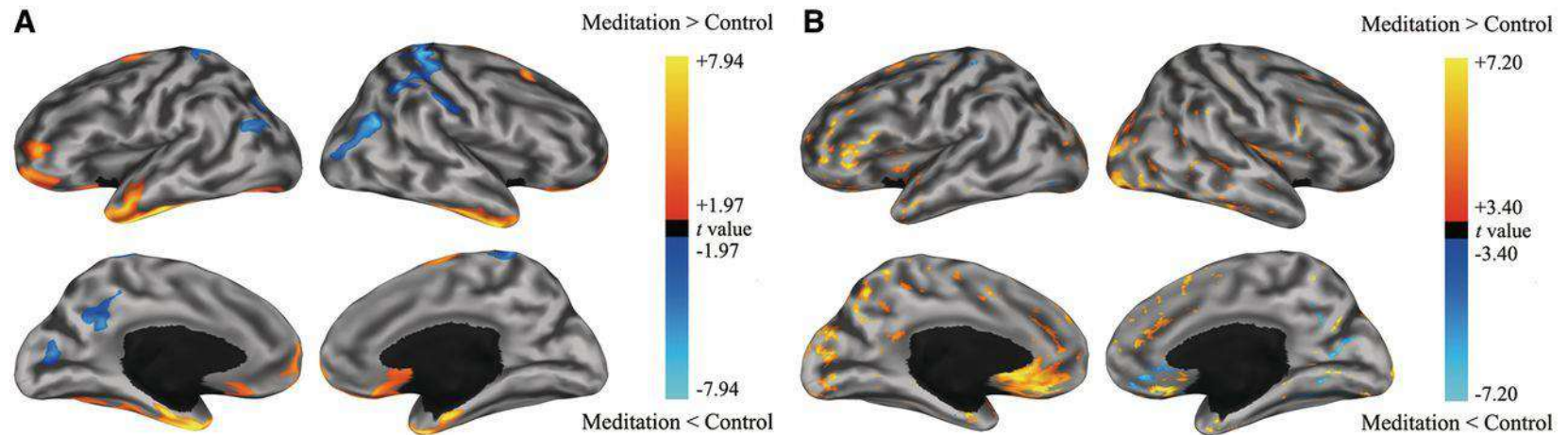


- Meditation participants
- Control participants

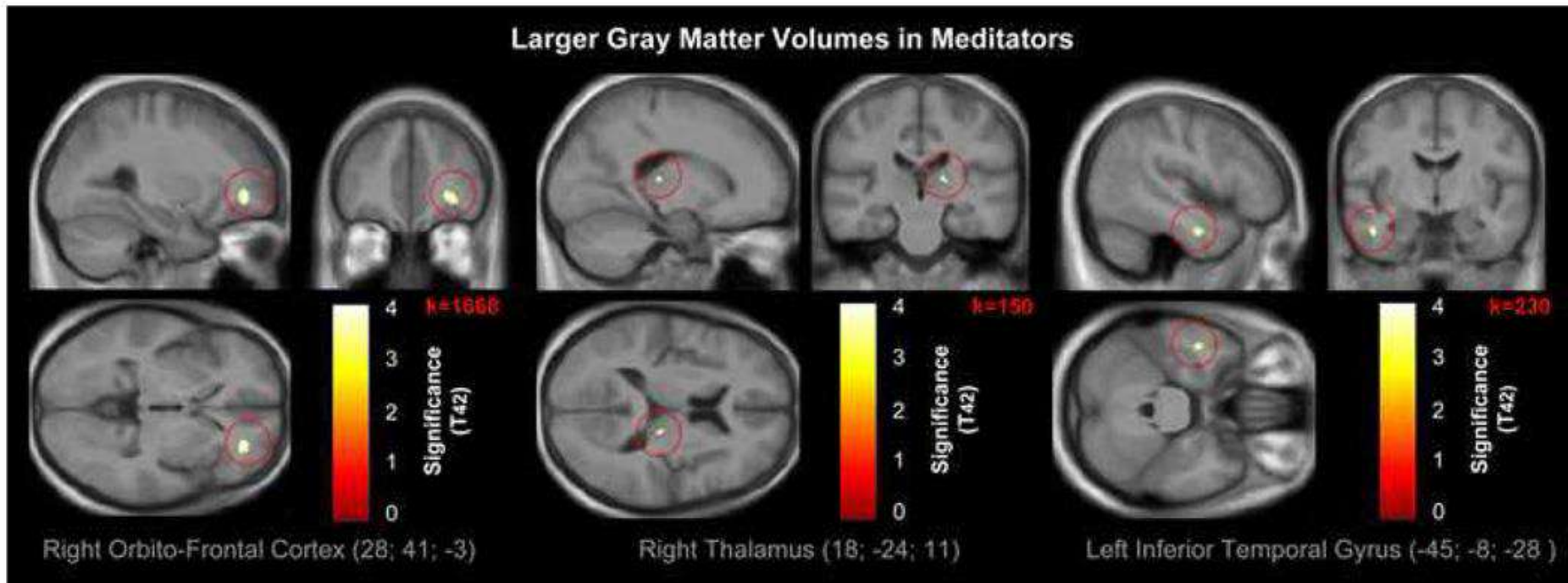




**Regional maps showing the statistical differences (A) in cortical thickness and (B) in FA between meditation practitioners and control subjects.**



# Larger gray matter volume in PFC and hippocampus

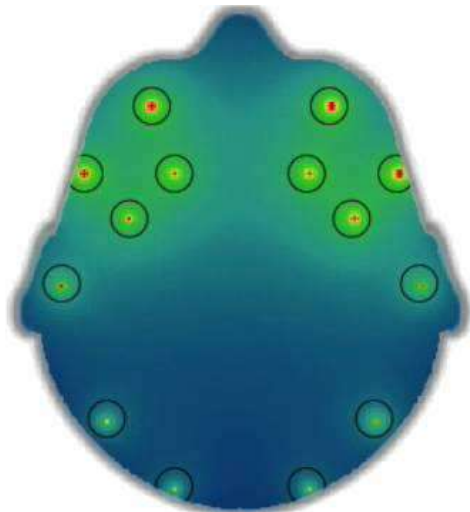


**delta**  
1-4 Hz

gain



buffer

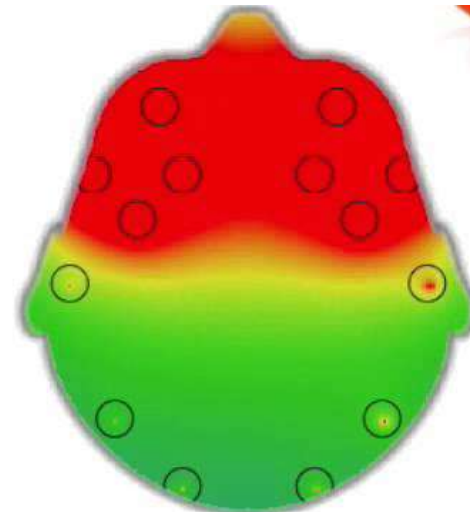


**theta**  
4-7 Hz

gain



buffer

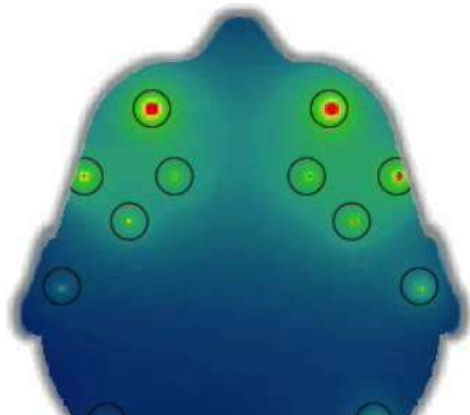


**alpha**  
7-13 Hz

gain



buffer

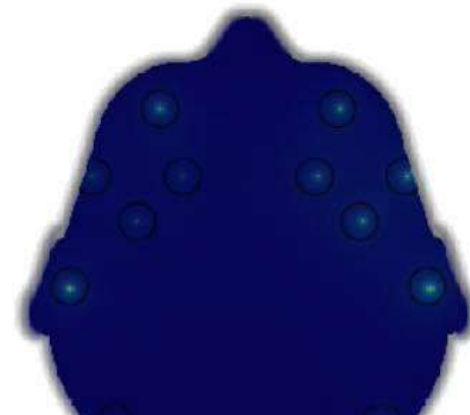


**beta**  
13-30 Hz

gain



buffer



# Ego depletion and meditation



## Consciousness and Cognition

Volume 21, Issue 2, June 2012, Pages 1016–1022

Standing on the Verge: Lessons and Limits from the Empirical Study of  
Consciousness



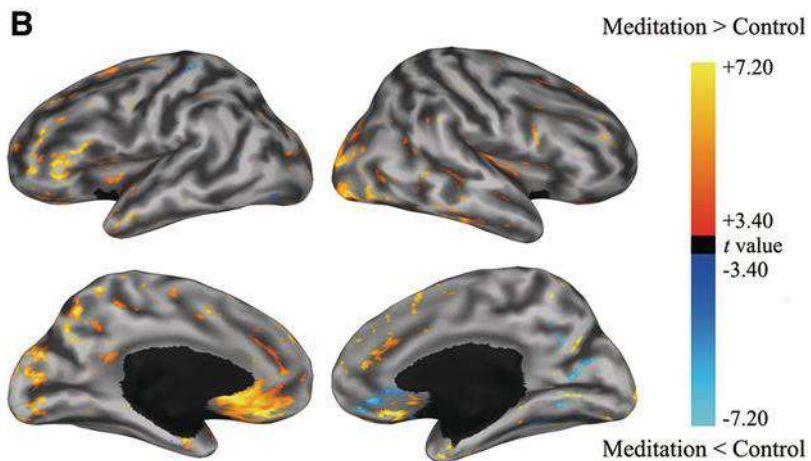
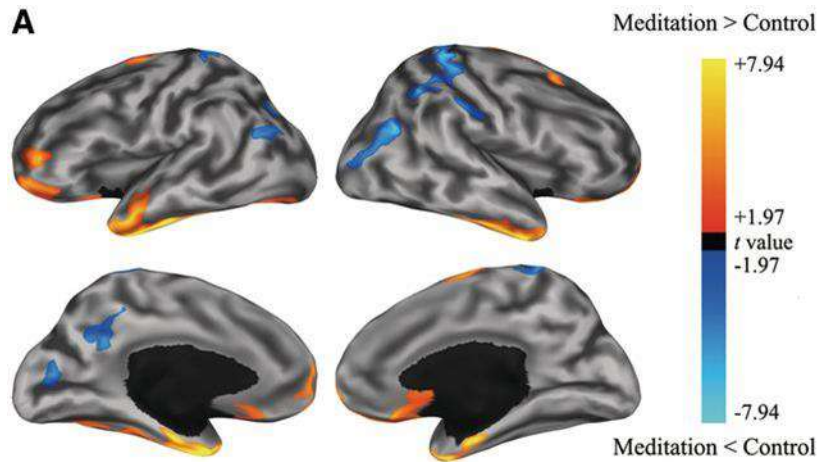
Short Communication

## Mindfulness meditation counteracts self-control depletion

Malte Friese<sup>a</sup>,  , Claude Messner<sup>b</sup>, Yves Schaffner<sup>a</sup>



# Ego depletion and meditation

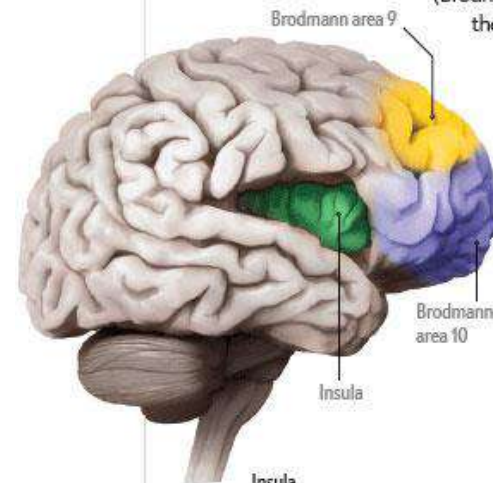


## A MEDITATION BENEFIT

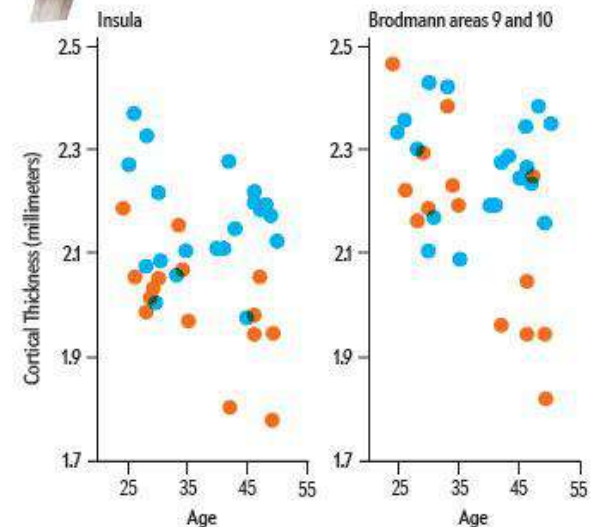
### Grow More Brain

Researchers from several universities explored whether meditation might bring about structural changes in brain tissue. Using magnetic resonance imaging, they found that 20 experienced practitioners of one type of Buddhist meditation had a greater volume of brain tissue in the prefrontal cortex

(Brodmann areas 9 and 10) and the insula than a control group did (graphs). These regions play a role in processing attention, sensory information and internal bodily sensations. Future long-term studies will be needed to confirm this finding.



- Meditation participants
- Control participants



**MISURE**



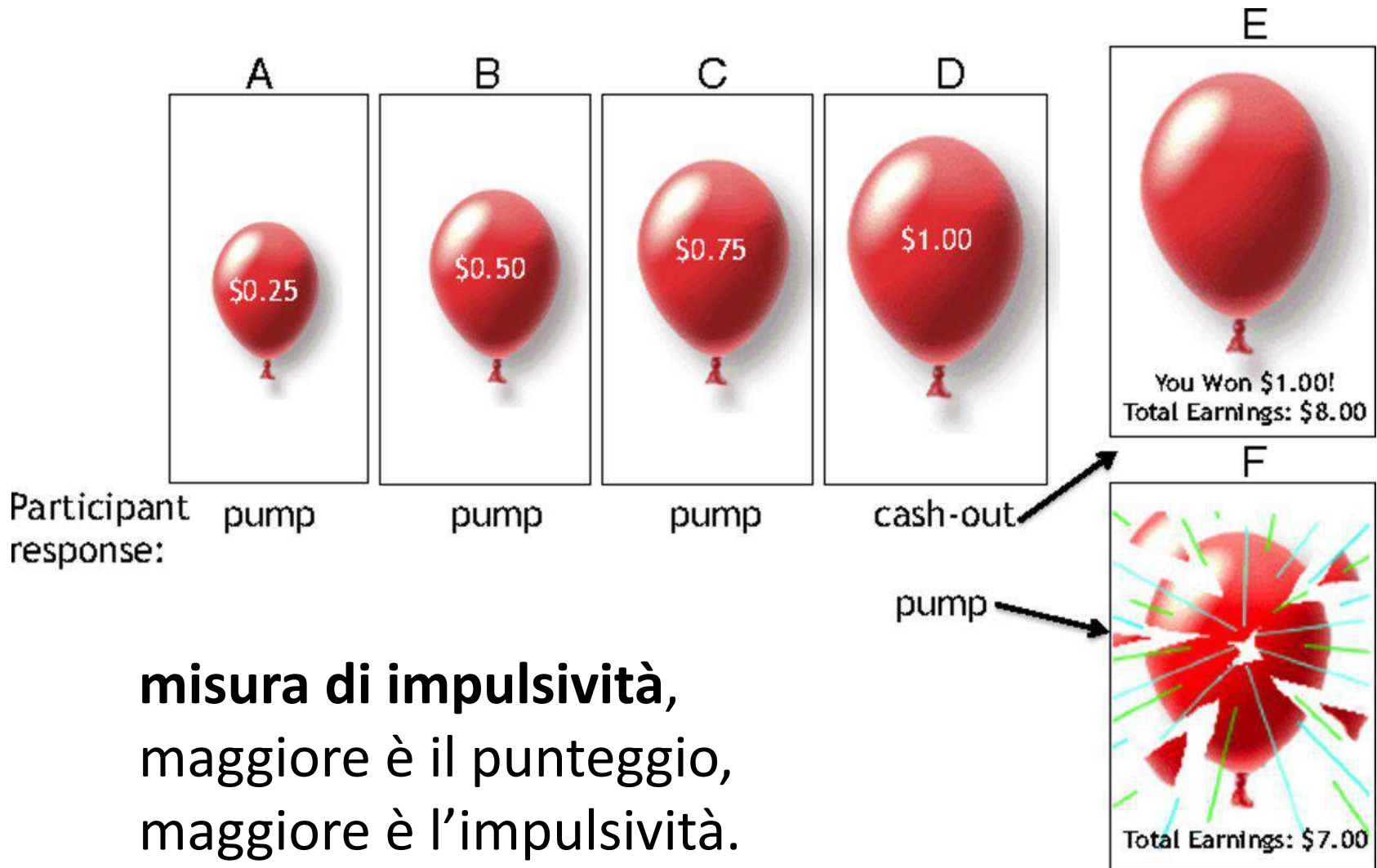
# **SDQ - Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire (Goodman & Goodman, 2009)**

punti di forza e le debolezze dell'adolescente in cinque dimensioni:

- **emozioni,**
- **comportamento,**
- **rapporti sociali,**
- **disattenzione/iperattività,**
- ~~**Prosocialità**~~

punteggi maggiori corrispondono a maggiori difficoltà nella dimensione in oggetto

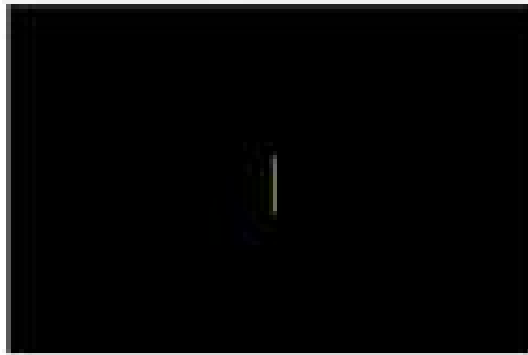
# Balloon Analogue Risk Task (BART-Y)



**misura di impulsività,**  
maggiore è il punteggio,  
maggiore è l'impulsività.

# Temporal Discounting Task

Fixation



1s

Decision period



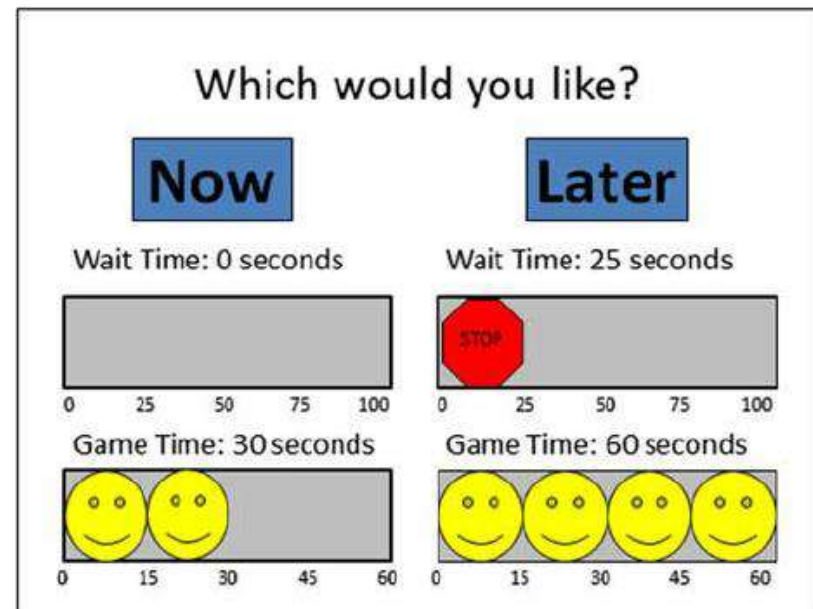
variable duration

Choice made

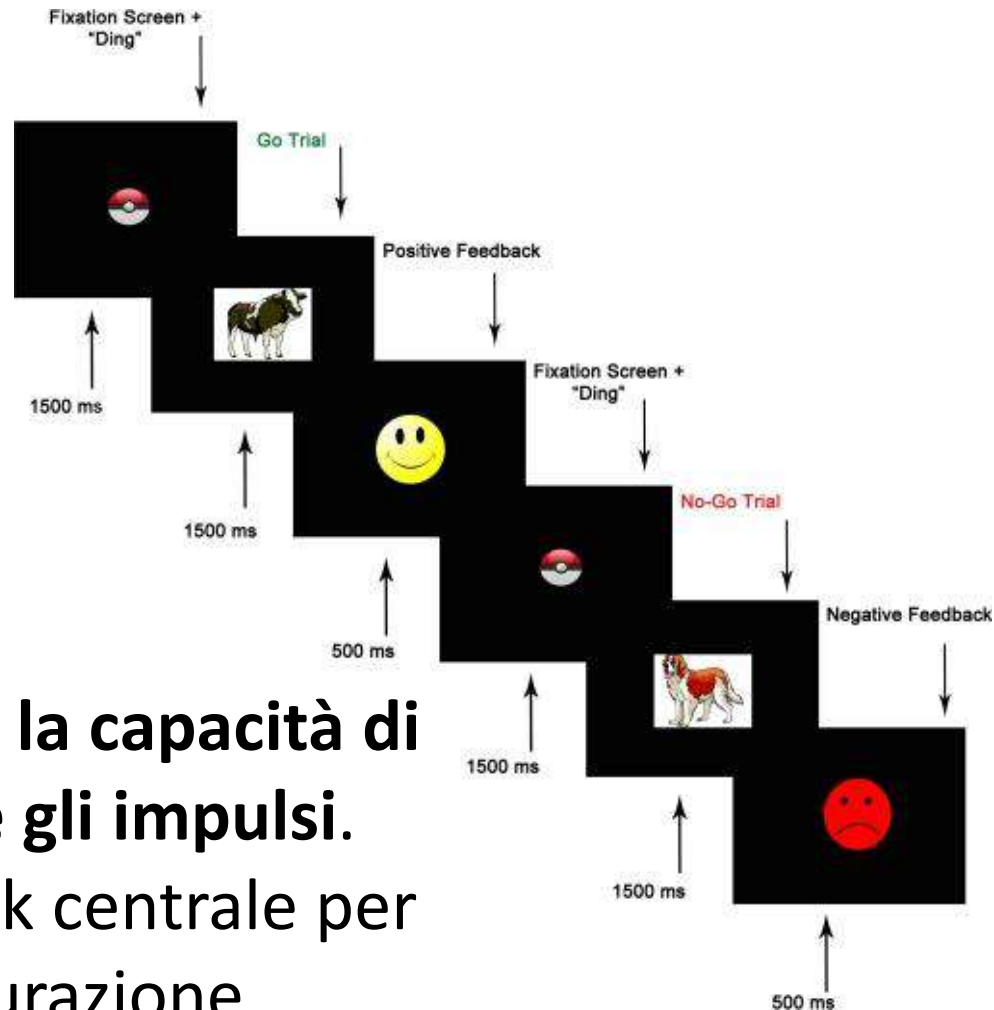


1s

**misura di impulsività,**  
maggiore è il punteggio,  
maggiore è l'impulsività.



# Go-No Go Task



**valuta la capacità di  
inibire gli impulsi.**  
Un task centrale per  
la misurazione  
dell'autocontrollo

# Questionario di soddisfazione scolastica

- somministrato solo a T2
- Misurazione della soddisfazione percepita nei confronti dell'anno scolastico passato.

Quattro item valutavano:

1. La soddisfazione in generale;
2. L'impegno richiesto dalla scuola;
3. Quanto si erano trovati bene con i compagni di classe;
4. Quanto si erano trovati bene con gli insegnanti.

# Campione

		condizione		Totale
		controllo	sperimentale	
scuola	Ampezzo	0	17	17
	TS Campi Elisi	0	23	23
	Codroipo	20	20	40
	Forni di Sopra	0	11	11
	TS Istituto Dante	58	0	58
	Muggia	0	23	23
	San Daniele	18	24	42
	Villa Santina	34	0	34
	Totale	130	118	248



# SDQ - Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire (Emozioni)

Condizione	N	Media	DS
<b>Controllo</b>	116	12.24	3.18
<b>Sperimentale</b>	108	11.79	3.25
<b>Totale</b>	224	12.02	3.22

Condizione	N	Media	DS
<b>Controllo</b>	125	11.83	3.18
<b>Sperimentale</b>	110	11.57	3.14
<b>Totale</b>	235	11.71	3.16

# SDQ - Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire (comportamento)

Condizione	N	Media	DS
Controllo	115	8.37	2.37
Sperimentale	107	8.12	2.37
Totale	222	8.25	2.37

Condizione	N	Media	DS
Controllo	122	8.16	2.46
Sperimentale	106	7.76	2.01
Totale	228	7.97	2.27

# SDQ - Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire (disattenzione)

Condizione	N	Media	DS
<b>Controllo</b>	114	12.05	3.32
<b>Sperimentale</b>	105	11.30	3.47
<b>Totale</b>	219	11.69	3.40

Condizione	N	Media	DS
<b>Controllo</b>	122	11.50	3.35
<b>Sperimentale</b>	111	11.12	3.34
<b>Totale</b>	233	11.32	3.34

# SDQ - Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire (rapporti)

Condizione	N	Media	DS
<b>Controllo</b>	114	8.40	3.02
<b>Sperimentale</b>	105	8.39	2.60
<b>Totale</b>	219	8.40	2.82

Condizione	N	Media	DS
<b>Controllo</b>	124	8.29	2.57
<b>Sperimentale</b>	109	8.08	2.52
<b>Totale</b>	233	8.19	2.54

# Balloon Analogue Risk Task (BART-Y)

Condizione	N	Media	DS
<b>Controllo</b>	113	386.88	138.51
<b>Sperimentale</b>	107	423.88	127.66
<b>Totale</b>	220	404.88	134.32

Condizione	N	Media	DS
<b>Controllo</b>	117	442.73	<b>+ 15%</b> 129.40
<b>Sperimentale</b>	112	467.31	<b>+ 10%</b> 112.83
<b>Totale</b>	229	454.75	121.94

# Temporal discount task

**T1**

Condizione	N	Ric immediata	Ric differita
<b>Controllo</b>	113	15 (13.3%)	98 (86.7%)
<b>Sperimentale</b>	109	16 (14.7%)	93 (85.3%)
<b>Totale</b>	222	31 (14.0%)	191 (86.0%)

**T2**

Condizione	N	Ric immediata	Ric differita
<b>Controllo</b>	121	24 (19.8%)	97 (80.2%)
<b>Sperimentale</b>	110	21 (19.1%)	89 (80.9%)
<b>Totale</b>	231	45 (19.5%)	186 (80.5%)



# Frequenze e proporzioni cambiamento scelte

Condizione	Da ric. differita a ric. immediata	Stessa scelta	Da ric. immediata a ric. differita
<b>Controllo</b>	13 (12.5%)	87 (83.7%)	4 (3.8%)
<b>Sperimentale</b>	15 (14.9%)	78 (77.2%)	8 (7.9%)

nella condizione sperimentale c'è una maggior proporzione di cambiamenti nella direzione della scelta più matura

**35% da ricompensa immediata a ricompensa differita, contro il 23% nella condizione di controllo**

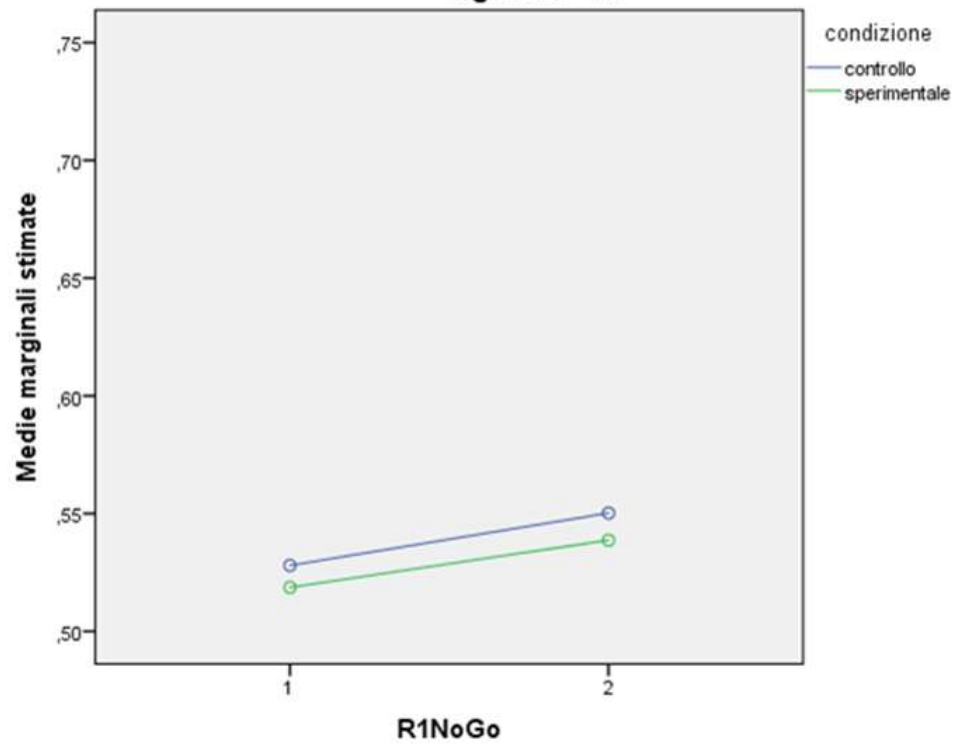
# Proporzione Accuratezza Go-NoGo

## Round 1 NoGo (medie)

Condizione	Media	DS
Controllo T1	.54	.24
Sperimentale T1	.54	.22
Controllo T2	.57 + 0.3	.23
Sperimentale T2	.62 + 0.8	.24

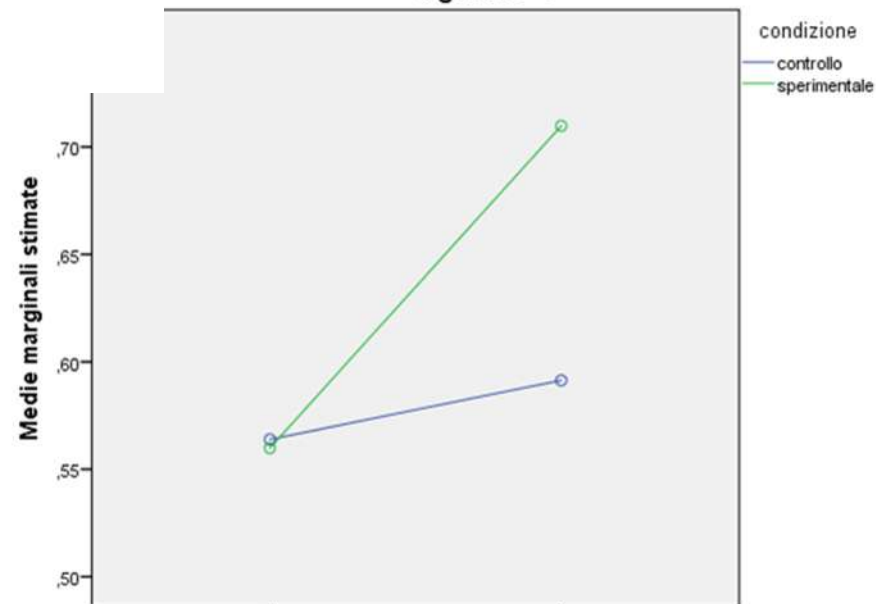
### Medie marginali stimate di MEASURE\_1

a genere = M



### Medie marginali stimate di MEASURE\_1

a genere = F



# Soddisfazione anno scolastico

	<b>Controllo</b> M (ds)	<b>Sperimentale</b> M (ds)	<b>p (df)</b>	<b>p</b>
<b>Soddisfazione</b>	2.86 (.82)	3.01 (.81)	1.441 (235)	.15
<b>Impegno richiesto</b>	2.97 (.75)	3.07 (.73)	1.070 (236)	.29
<b>Compagni</b>	3.26 (.90)	3.28 (.80)	.647 (236)	.52
<b>Insegnanti</b>	2.86 (.86)	3.11 (.76)	2.283 (235)	.02

# JUST/2014/ACTION GRANTS

## RISE

**Reinforce Inner Strength Effectively to combat bullying  
Civiform**



Co-funded by the Rights, Equality and Citizenship (REC)  
Programme of the European Union



**PREVENIRE  
IL BULLISMO:**

# Alcuni risultati

con Test Multidimensionale dell'Autostima (Bracken, 1992 e 2005) adattato

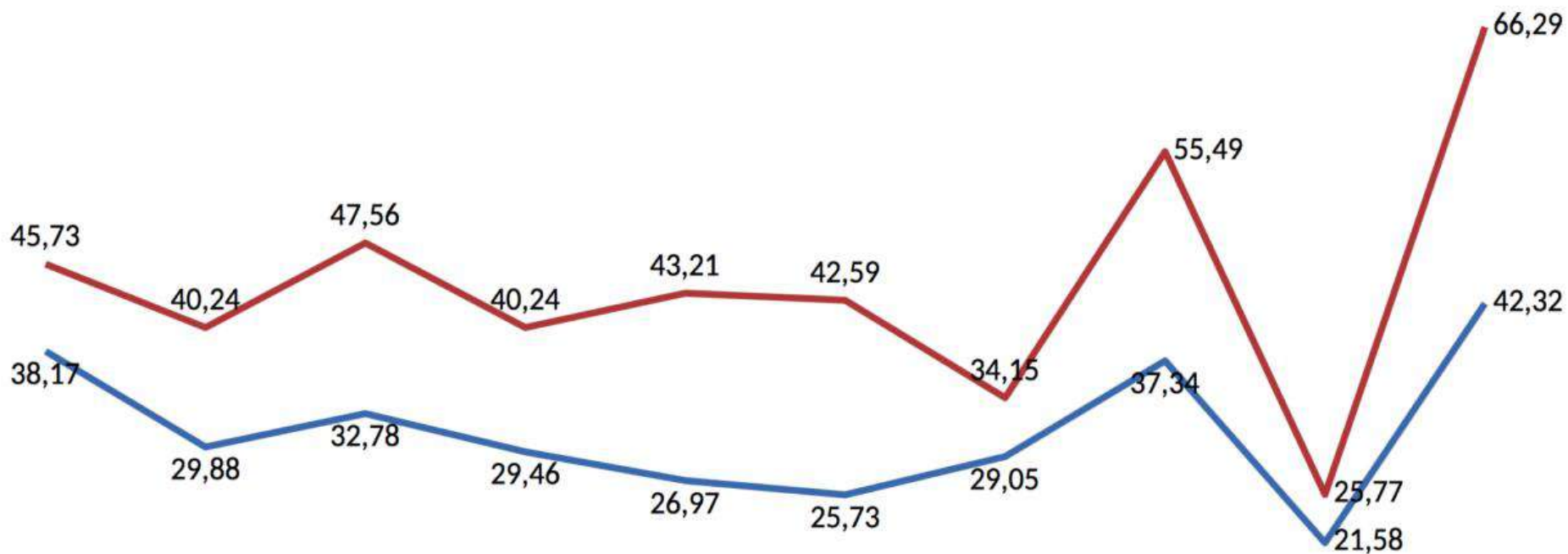
- 1) Relazioni interpersonali: come il soggetto valuta i suoi rapporti sociali, con i pari e con gli adulti;
- 2) Competenza nel controllo sull'ambiente: la sensazione di essere in grado di dominare gli eventi della propria vita;
- 3) L'emotività: la vita emotiva, la capacità di controllare le emozioni negative;
- 4) Il successo scolastico: i successi o i fallimenti sperimentati nella classe;
- 5) La vita familiare: le relazioni nella famiglia, il grado in cui si sente amato e valorizzato;
- 6) Il vissuto corporeo: la percezione del suo aspetto, delle capacità fisiche e sportive, ecc.



## Ragazzi - Tu e gli altri

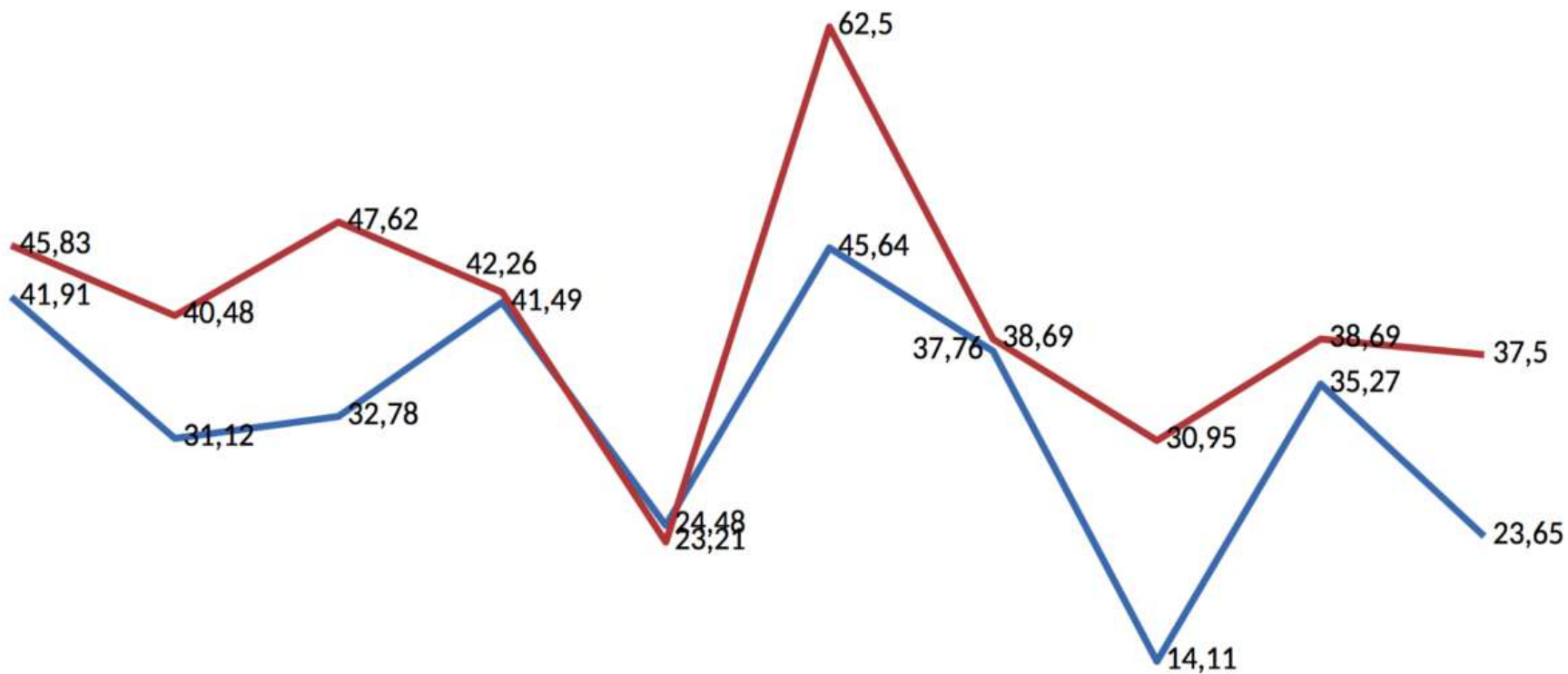
### Confronto dei risultati tra la prima e la seconda somministrazione

— Prima — Dopo



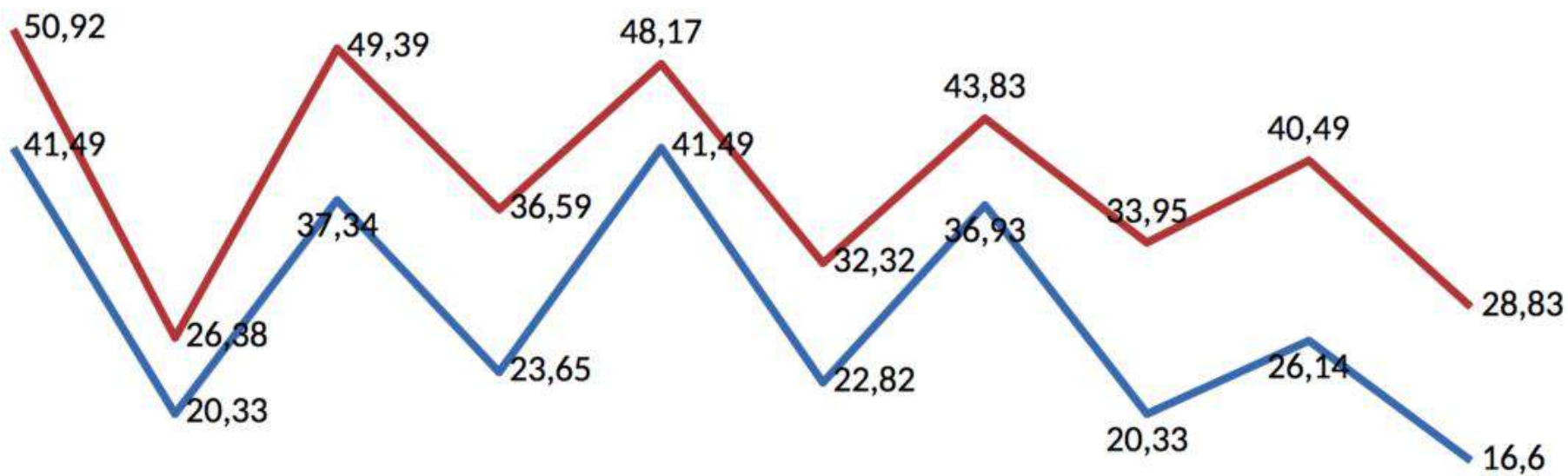
## Ragazzi - Come ti senti di solito? Confronto dei risultati tra la prima e la seconda somministrazione

— Prima — Dopo



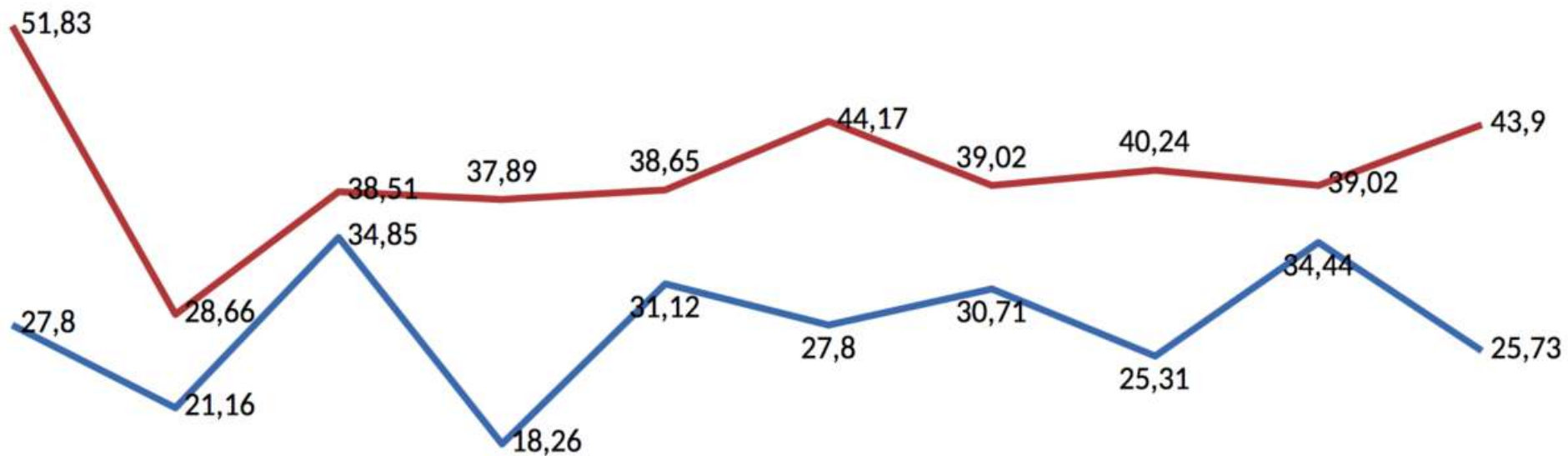
## Ragazzi - Come ti senti a scuola? Confronto dei risultati tra la prima e la seconda somministrazione

— Prima  
— Dopo

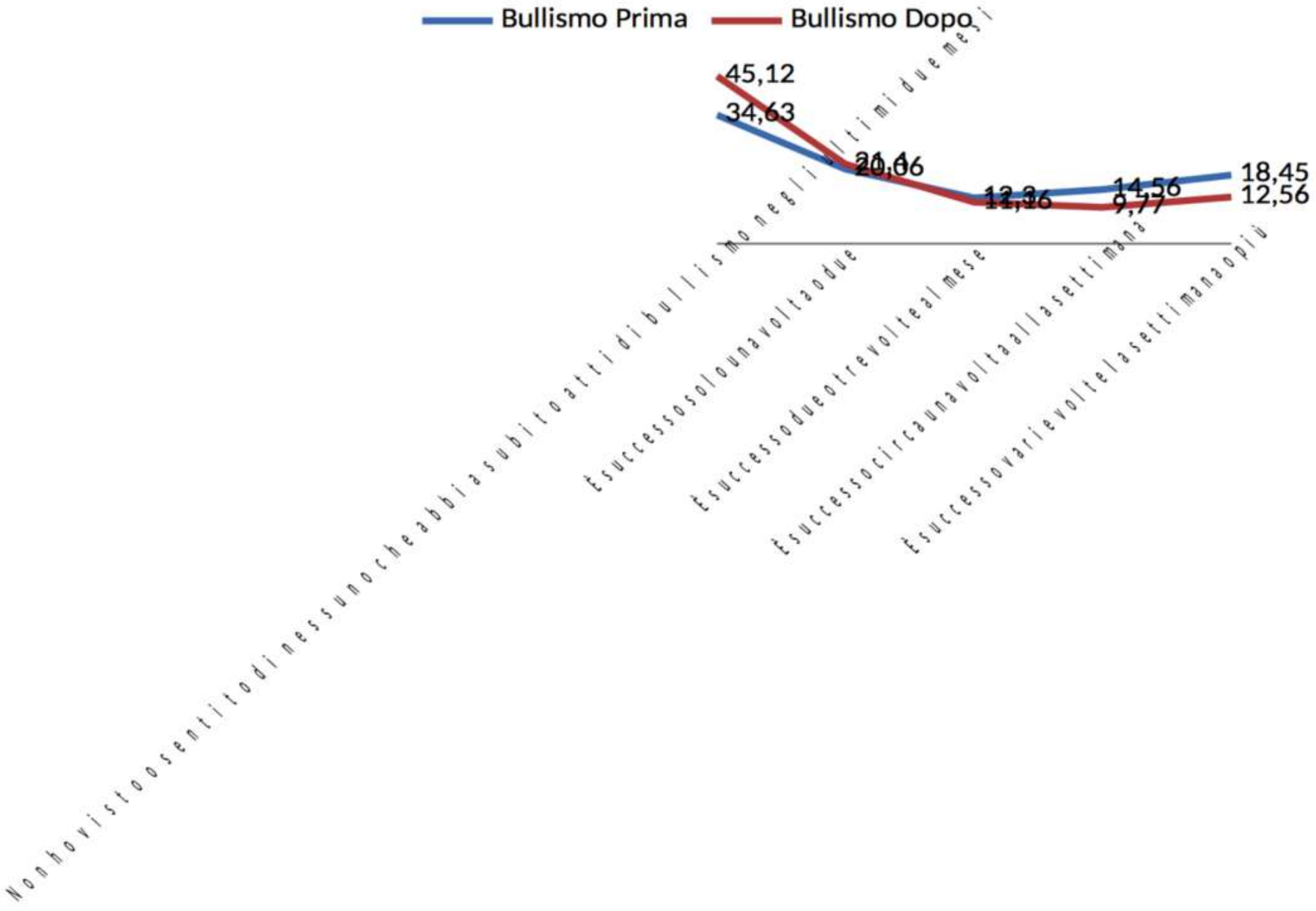


## Ragazzi - Come ti senti all'interno del collegio? Confronto dei risultati tra la prima e la seconda somministrazione

— Prima — Dopo



— Bullismo Prima — Bullismo Dopo



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UNIVERSITÀ  
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COMITATO  
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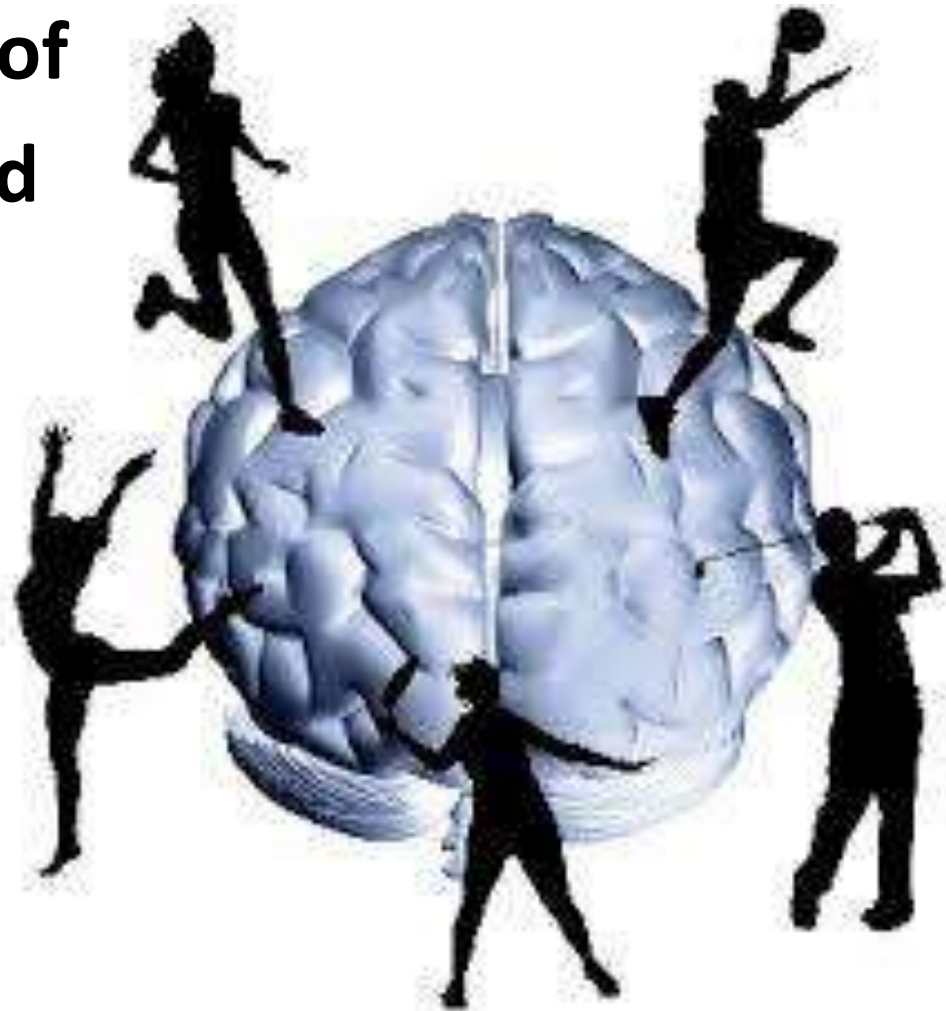
# **SPORT, BRAIN, EMOTIONS AND EXECUTIVE FUNCTIONS**



# Sports, cognitive functions, executive functions and well-being

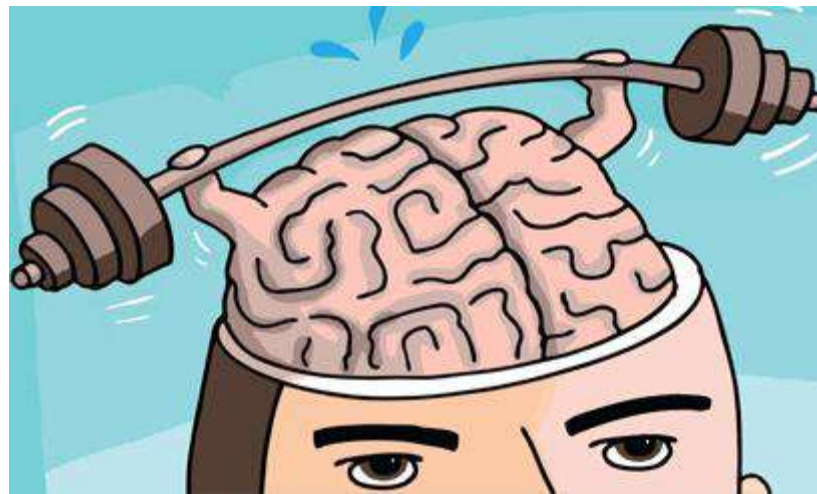
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- **Physical exercise increases neuroplasticity**
- **Physical exercise activates the brain reward system and the system of endogenous opioids and cannabinoids**

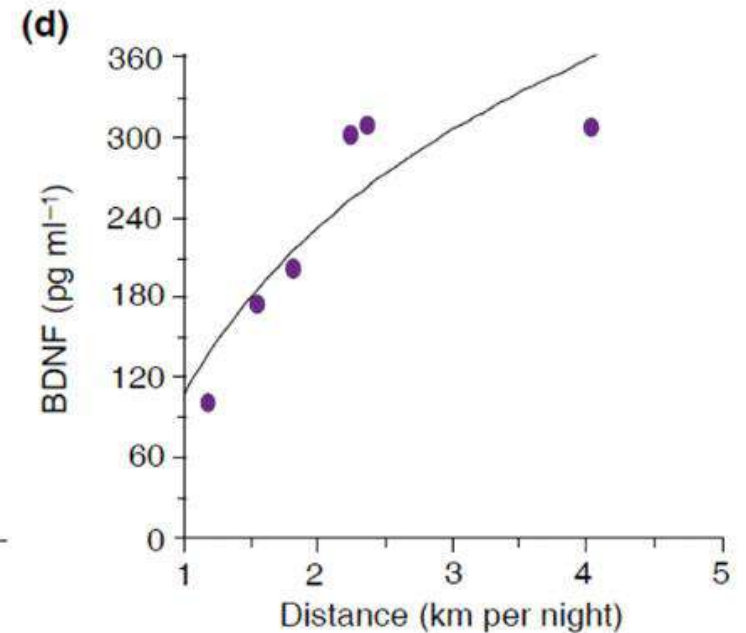
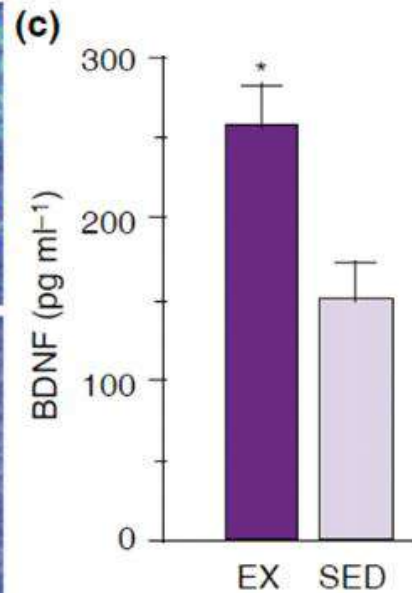
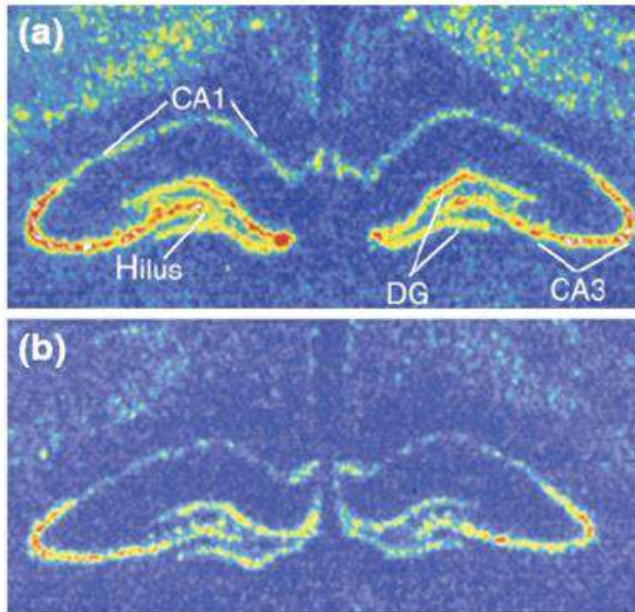


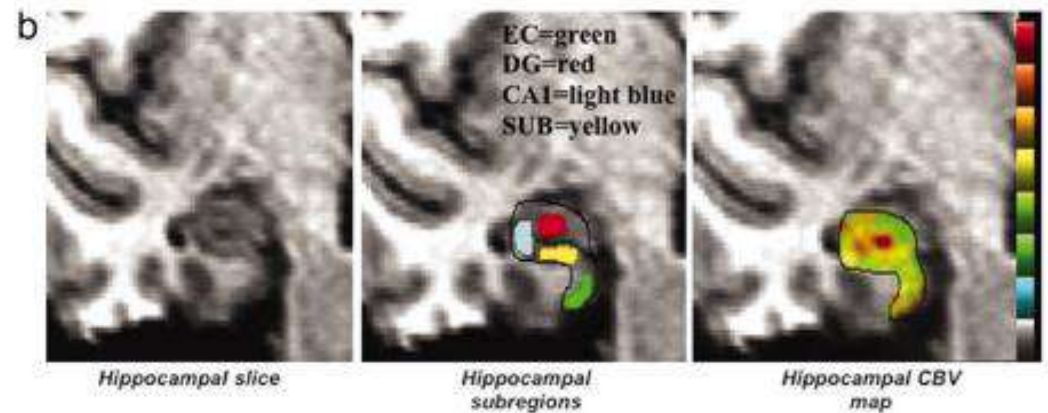
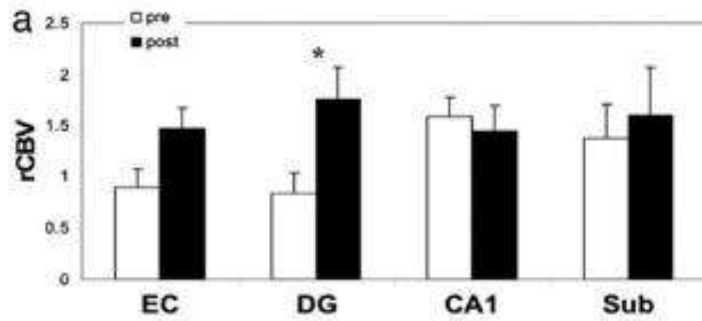
# Sport and neuroplasticity

- Physical activity stimulates the production of growth factors, the first promoters of neuroplastic phenomena



# Running and BDNF in hippocampus





## Exercise Selectively Increases Dentate Gyrus CBV in Humans and Correlates with Aerobic Fitness and Cognition

Pereira A C et al. PNAS 2007;104:5638-5643



## **Adult Hippocampal Neurogenesis: A Possible Way How Physical Exercise Counteracts Stress**

Suk-Yu Yau,<sup>\*†‡<sup>1,2</sup></sup> Benson Wui-Man Lau,<sup>\*†‡<sup>2</sup></sup> and Kwok-Fai So<sup>\*†‡§</sup>

<sup>\*</sup>Department of Anatomy, Li Ka Shing Faculty of Medicine, The University of Hong Kong, Pokfulam, Hong Kong SAR, PR China

<sup>†</sup>The State Key Laboratory of Brain and Cognitive Sciences, The University of Hong Kong, Pokfulam, Hong Kong SAR, PR China

<sup>‡</sup>Research Centre of Heart, Brain, Hormone and Healthy Aging, Li Ka Shing Faculty of Medicine,  
The University of Hong Kong, Pokfulam, Hong Kong SAR, PR China

<sup>§</sup>Joint laboratory for Brain function and Health (BFAH), Jinan University and The University of Hong Kong, GuangZhou, PR China

It was considered that neurogenesis only occurred during the embryonic and developmental stage. This view has greatly changed since the discovery of adult neurogenesis in two brain regions: the hippocampus and the olfactory bulb. Recently, it is suggested that altered hippocampal neurogenesis is related to pathophysiology of mood disorders and mechanism of antidepressant treatments. Accumulating knowledge about the effects of physical exercise on brain function suggests a special role of adult hippocampal neurogenesis in cognitive and mental health, even though the functional significance of adult neurogenesis is still debated. The beneficial effects of running correlating with increased adult neurogenesis may provide a hint that newborn neurons may be involved, at least in part, in the counteractive mechanism of physical exercise on stress-related disorders, like depression. The present review provides an overview of recent findings to emphasize the possible involvement of hippocampal neurogenesis in mediating the beneficial effects of physical exercise on counteracting stress.

# The International Journal of Neuropsychopharmacology

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[The antidepressant effect of running is associated with increased hippocampal cell proliferation](#)

Astrid Bjørnebekk <sup>a1</sup>, Aleksander A. Mathé <sup>a2</sup> and Stefan Brené <sup>a1a2c1</sup>

<sup>a1</sup> Department of Neuroscience, Karolinska Institutet, Stockholm, Sweden

<sup>a2</sup> Division of Psychiatry, Neurotec Department, Karolinska University Hospital, Huddinge, Stockholm, Sweden

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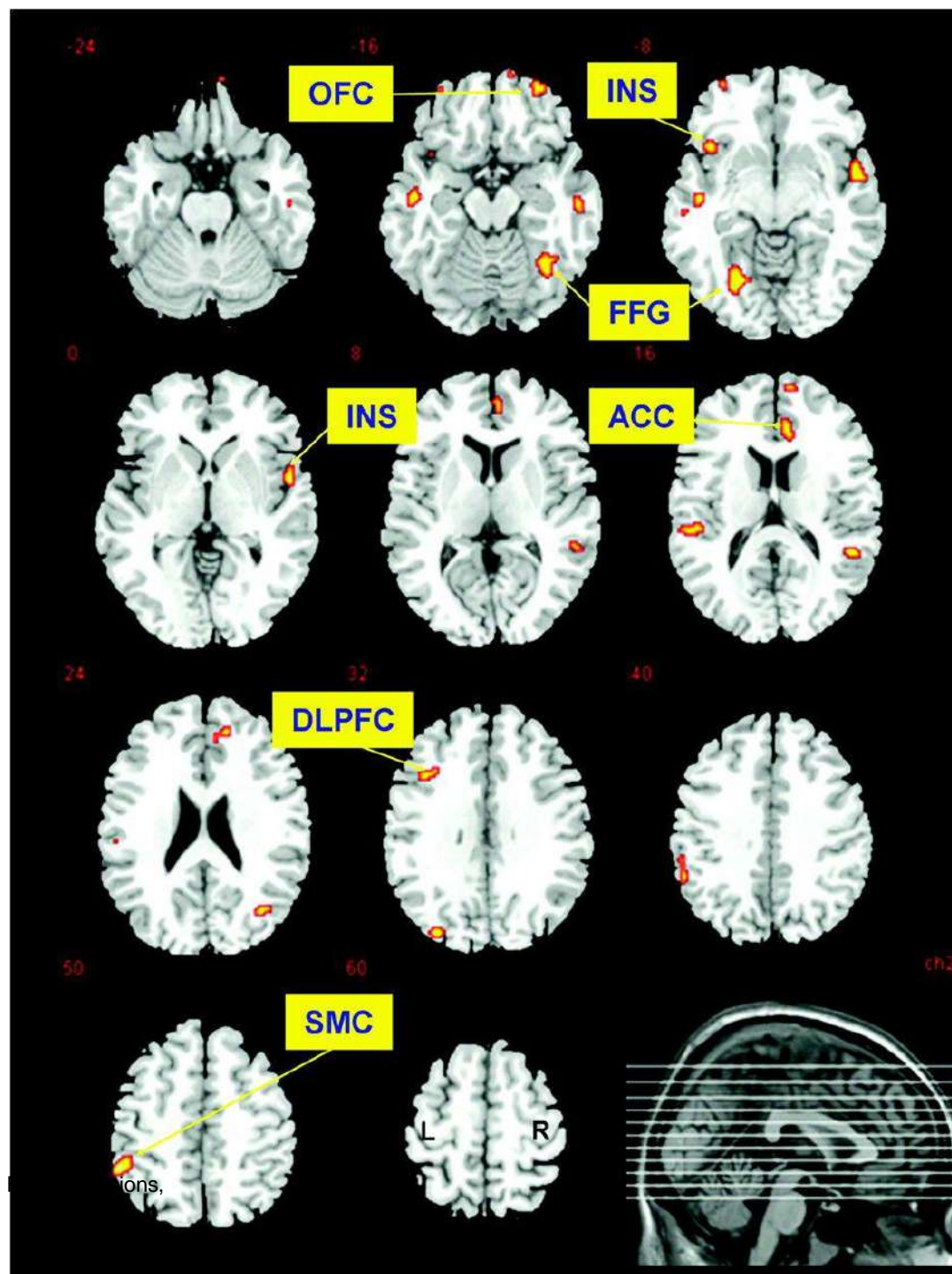
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# Correlation of opioidergic binding in runners with VAS ratings of euphoria.

Henning Boecker et al. *Cereb. Cortex* 2008;18:2523-2531

C O R  
Cerebral T  
X E  
*Cerebral* CORTEX



## Endocannabinoids and exercise

A Dietrich, W F McDaniel

*Br J Sports Med* 2004;38:536-541. doi: 10.1136/bjism.2004.011718

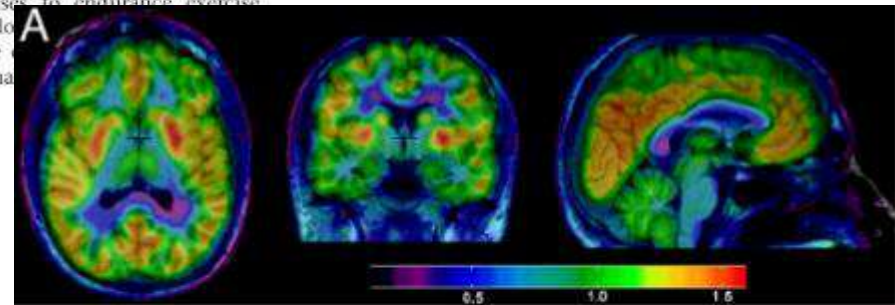
Exercise induces changes in mental status, particularly analgesia, sedation, anxiolysis, and a sense of wellbeing. The mechanisms underlying these changes remain unknown. Recent findings show that exercise increases serum concentrations of endocannabinoids, suggesting a possible explanation for a number of these changes. This article provides an overview of this emerging field.

An exercise induced altered state of consciousness has long been appreciated by endurance athletes. The effect has been well documented in the popular literature and subjected to scientific investigation.<sup>1-3</sup> In the late 1960s, the psychological changes associated with prolonged physical activity were often described

However, there are a number of serious problems with the "endorphin hypothesis."<sup>11,12</sup> Studies examining the exercise-endorphin connection produced equivocal results, and many of the studies were plagued by methodological confounds. For instance,  $\beta$  endorphin has almost the same amino acid sequence as other members of the pro-opiomelanocortin family such as the adrenocorticotrophic hormone, making cross reactivity to the detecting antibody a serious confound. Also, adrenocorticotrophic hormone is a stress hormone that is known to increase with exercise, compounding the problem. There are also major inconsistencies between the endorphin hypothesis and the physiological and biochemical responses to endurance exercise. For instance,  $\beta$  endorphin binds to the  $\mu$  opioid receptor, the receptor that mediates the analgesic effect of

- + DA & 5-HT
- - glu
- - amygdala
- + opioids

# Physical exercise and endocannabinoids



H. Donald Burns et al.,  
Positron emission tomography (PET)  
tracer for in vivo human PET brain  
imaging of the cannabinoid-1 receptor  
PNAS June 5, 2007 vol. 104 no. 23  
9800-9805

# Il progetto regionale «imparare a gestire le emozioni»

- Attività di formazione agli studenti su meccanismi dei processi mentali e strategie di regolazione delle emozioni e per l'autocontrollo con peer education
- Attività di aggiornamento del personale docente e di informazione per genitori
- Messa a punto e utilizzo di una App per una ricerca/intervento sulle variabili momentanee ed ecologiche delle emozioni nei ragazzi

# Grazie per l'attenzione!!

Stefano Canali



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# Dual N-back

Dual N-Back Training

Type: **Dual** N-Back: **2**

Tutorial

**Demo Mode**

Press the Spacebar to start training  
or click this message

A: Position Match      L: Audio Match

IQ Boost

## Dual n-back task

ACCURACY    TIME

00%    00:00

<http://brainworkshop.sourceforge.net>

<http://brainscale.net/dual-n-back/training>