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Social and Emotional Decision Making Following Frontal Lobe Injury

Facundo Manes

Cognitive Neurology Section. Institute for Neurological Research (FLENI), Buenos Aires, ARGENTINA.

ABSTRACT

Neuropsychological, psychophysiological and functional imaging research has begun to offer insights into the everyday difficulties in decision-making experienced by some patients with frontal lobe damage. It is widely accepted that the ventral prefrontal cortex plays a pivotal role in social and emotional decision-making. In this presentation I will review experimental findings using the Iowa Gambling Task and the Cambridge Gamble Task that explore the brain mechanisms of decision-making. Convergent evidence from the two tasks confirms the importance of ventral PFC, but also highlights the relevance of lesion laterality, lesion aetiology, and the contribution of other brain regions (including the dorsal prefrontal cortex and amygdala) to decision-making abilities. The extent to which disrupted decision-making can be separated from the broader domain of executive function will be discussed.