

Key Points from the Research

Two diary studies have been completed, one with 24 participants, using paper questionnaires, the second with 41, using hand-held computers on which the participant recorded the data. In both studies the diary keeping period was followed by an interview which explored the decision situation, the risk involved and the potential consequences in more detail.

Findings from analysis of 232 decisions in which awareness of the feelings of the other played a role:

- People perceive risk in a wide variety of decisions including buying a house, undergoing a medical operation, and telling a friend something that might potentially upset them.
- Our anxiety and excitement about decisions is affected by the perceived emotions of close others.
- Perceptions of risk severity also affect our emotions.
- Effects of others' emotions do not only depend on changed perceptions of risk severity suggesting more direct "emotional contagion."
- The hand-held computer method is a successful and efficient way of gathering information on events in people's everyday life. It has a higher compliance rate than the paper and pen method and it is possible to get additional data such as daily mood measures.

The first of two experimental studies has also been completed and the second is underway. Both studies involve partners collaborating in a computer-controlled quiz-game either across a video link or without visual access to each other.

The first study shows:

- Surprisingly, one-way visual access to the other person's face while choosing the correct answer *decreases* rather than *increases* the proportion of correct answers. If we can see the helper it makes our use of their advice worse.
- Participants who were more emotionally expressive were affected more negatively by one-way visual access to their partners, suggesting that expectations about reciprocated emotion may distort interpretations of expressions when direct interaction is impossible.
- Partners who were more emotionally expressive did not provide more helpful visual feedback than partners who were less emotionally expressive.

Our second experimental study compares one-way and two-way visual access directly to check whether the effects found in study 1 depend on lack of interactivity between partners.

Conference proceedings and SCARR WP16 publication [Link to <http://www.kent.ac.uk/scarr/papers/Wk%20Paper%2016LivingstoneSimons.pdf>]