

Vasim Patel

## Little Albert Paper

In the case of Albert researchers John B. Watson and Rosalie Rayner tried to see if classical conditioning could be used on human beings. Their test subject was a baby named Albert. They introduced Albert to a white rat, and then struck a bar behind his head. This caused him to get scared and he continually did it when he touched the rat as well as with other similar objects or creatures and soon enough he began to fear anything white and fuzzy.

This is an example of classical conditioning, the act of pairing an unconditioned stimulus to a conditioned stimuli. His unconditioned response to the bar being struck behind his head was paired with the appearance of the rat, which became generalized into anything white and fuzzy like it. The blocks he played with before did not cause him any issues, and he did not react differently than how he usually did so he could still differentiate between stimuli, but his conditioned response to anything white and fuzzy was fear and crying. He had a generalized response to them. As time passed his response became progressively worse. I think this was because of uncontrolled aspects of the experiment. For example when they introduced him to a dog, he slowly approached it but the dog barked right in his face startling Albert further generalizing his response and strengthening it.

The experimenters were unable to treat Albert and decondition the response because he was taken away from them. The easiest way to treat Albert would be to have him sit and play in a room and introduce him to a white rat several times, except without associating any other stimuli with it. By using flooding eventually Albert would realize that the white rat is harmless. Then I would say for them to introduce a few other stimuli, such as a white dog and a rabbit, like before, in order to make sure that Albert realizes that he doesn't need to fear any white or fuzzy object. Of course, it could be possible to treat him with the same thing that caused his reaction in the first place. One could classically condition Albert by associating a different stimulus to the white fuzzy objects, such as giving Albert a snack when he's around a rat. The goal would be to associate a positive conditioned response to replace the negative one. This would only be possible if Watson and Rayner were correct, which would mean humans can be classically conditioned, which implies that we are heavily controlled by our environments.