**Assessing cross-price interactions between food and social reinforcement**

Cyrus Kirkman, Haoran Wan, Carol Franceschini, & Timothy Hackenberg

Reed College

Prior research has shown that responding can be maintained under concurrent food and social reinforcement in rats, but little is known about interactions between these reinforcers. In the present study, we approached the problem from a behavioral economic perspective, using demand-curve methods to analyze interactions between food and social reinforcement. Four rats were given repeated choices between food and 10-s of social access to a familiar rat on concurrent schedules. Social access was arranged by lifting a door to a restraint, within which the partner rat was held. The price of social access was held constant at fixed ratio (FR) 1 across all conditions, while the price of food was systematically increased from FR 1 to FR 64. Of interest was *cross-price elasticity*, or demand for social reinforcement as a function of changes in the price of food reinforcement. Food responding was maintained at lower to moderate prices but declined to low levels at higher prices. Social responding was relatively constant at the lower to moderate food prices but increased when food responding dropped at the higher FR food prices, suggesting a substitutable relationship. The methods show promise as a way to quantify interactions between qualitatively different reinforcers.