

Sam Zorowitz

CLINICAL BIostatistician at the National Institutes of Mental Health

Porter Neuroscience Building (35), National Institutes of Health, Bethesda, MD

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Research Experience

National Institutes of Mental Health

CLINICAL BIostatistician

Bethesda, MD

Sep. 2023 - Present

I lead the design and analysis of human behavioral research in the Unit on the Neural Computations in Learning (PI: Angela Langdon).

Princeton University

PHD IN NEUROSCIENCE

Princeton, NJ

Sep. 2017 - Aug. 2023

I studied the factor structure of individual differences in reinforcement learning behaviors. I developed a battery of gamified and reliable reinforcement learning tasks, which was completed by 1,000+ adult participants. I used cognitive structural equation modeling to summarize the covariation in behaviors within- and across-tasks, and their relations to psychiatric symptoms.

Massachusetts General Hospital / Harvard Medical School

CLINICAL RESEARCH COORDINATOR

Boston, MA

Jun. 2014 - Jun. 2017

I was the lead analyst on three neuroimaging studies of cognitive control and approach-avoidance conflict in healthy and clinical populations. Analyses involved hierarchical Bayesian modeling, permutation-based fMRI analysis, and nonparametric EEG time series regression.

Education

Princeton University

PHD IN NEUROSCIENCE

Princeton, NJ

Sep. 2017 - Aug. 2023

- Advisors: Yael Niv, Nathaniel Daw
- Dissertation: The Factor Structure of Reinforcement Learning Behaviors

Johns Hopkins University

BA IN PSYCHOLOGICAL & BRAIN SCIENCES

Baltimore, MD

Sep. 2010 - May 2014

- Phi Beta Kappa, General University Honors

Publications

PREPRINTS

Zorowitz, S., Karni, G., Paredes, N., Daw, N. D., Niv, Y. (in preparation). Improving the reliability of the Pavlovian go/no-go task.

<https://psyarxiv.com/eb697>

Zorowitz, S., Tuominen, L. (under review). Confirmatory factor analysis of the Maltreatment and Abuse Chronology of Exposure (MACE) scale: Evidence for essential unidimensionality. <https://psyarxiv.com/uexgy>

Bennett, D., Radulescu, A., **Zorowitz, S.**, Felso, V., Niv, Y. (under review). Affect-congruent attention drives changes in reward expectations.

<https://psyarxiv.com/vu2cw>

JOURNAL ARTICLES

Zorowitz, S., Solis, J., Niv, Y., Bennett, D. (2023). Inattentive responding can induce spurious associations between task behavior and symptom measures. *Nature Human Behavior*. <https://doi.org/10.1038/s41562-023-01640-7>

Zorowitz, S., Chierchia, G., Blakemore, S. J., Daw, N. D. (2023). An item response theory analysis of the matrix reasoning item bank (MaRs-IB). *Behavior Research Methods*. <https://doi.org/10.3758/s13428-023-02067-8>

Zorowitz, S., Niv, Y. (2023). Improving the reliability of cognitive task measures: A narrative review. *Biological Psychiatry: Cognitive Neuroscience and Neuroimaging*. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.bpsc.2023.02.004>

Cox, J.M., Minerva, A.R., Fleming, W., Zimmerman, C.A., Hayes, C., **Zorowitz, S.**, Bandi, A., Ornelas, S., McMannon, B., Parker, N.F. and Witten, I.B. (2023). A neural substrate of sex-dependent modulation of motivation by value. *Nature Neuroscience*. <https://doi.org/10.1038/s41593-022-01229-9>

Weber, I., **Zorowitz, S.**, Niv, Y., Bennett, D. (2022). The effects of induced positive and negative affect on Pavlovian-instrumental interactions. *Cognition and Emotion*, 1-18. <https://doi.org/10.1080/02699931.2022.2109600>

Barbosa, J., Stein, H., **Zorowitz, S.**, Niv, Y., Summerfield, C., Soto-Faraco, S., Hyafil, A. (2022). A practical guide for studying human behavior in the lab. *Behavior Research Methods*. <https://doi.org/10.3758/s13428-022-01793-9>

- Zorowitz, S.**, Bennett, D., Choe, G., Niv, Y. (2021). A Recurring Reproduction Error in the Administration of the Generalized Anxiety Disorder Scale. *Lancet Psychiatry*. 8(3), P180-181. [https://doi.org/10.1016/S2215-0366\(21\)00001-8](https://doi.org/10.1016/S2215-0366(21)00001-8)
- Zorowitz, S.**, Momennejad, I., & Daw, N. D. (2020). Anxiety, avoidance, and sequential evaluation. *Computational Psychiatry*, 4, 1-17. https://doi.org/10.1162%2Fcpsy_a_00026
- Zorowitz, S.**, Rockhill, A. P., Ellard, K. K., Link, K. E., Herrington, T., Pizzagalli, D. A., Widge, A. S., Deckersbach, T., Dougherty, D. D. (2019). The Neural Basis of Approach-Avoidance Conflict: A Model Based Analysis. *eNeuro*. 10.1523/ENEURO.0115-19.2019
- Langdon, A. J., Hathaway, B. A., **Zorowitz, S.**, Harris, C. B. W., Winstanley, C. A. (2019). Relative insensitivity to time-out punishments induced by win-paired cues in a rat gambling task. *Psychopharmacology*, 236(8), 2543-2556. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s00213-019-05308-x>
- Widge, A. S., **Zorowitz, S.**, Basu, I., Paulk, A. C., Cash, S. S., Eskandar, E. N., Deckersbach, T., Miller, E. K., Dougherty, D. D. (2019). Deep Brain Stimulation of the Internal Capsule Enhances Human Cognitive Control and Prefrontal Cortex Function. *Nature Communications*, 10(1), 1-11. <https://doi.org/10.1038/s41467-019-09557-4>
- Widge, A. S., Ellard, K. K., Paulk, A. C., Basu, I., Yousefi, A., **Zorowitz, S.**, ... Eskandar, E. N. (2017). Treating refractory mental illness with closed-loop brain stimulation: Progress towards a patient-specific transdiagnostic approach. *Experimental Neurology*, 287, 461-472. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.expneurol.2016.07.021>
- Klein, E., Goering, S., Gagne, J., Shea, C. V., Franklin, R., **Zorowitz, S.**, ... & Widge, A. S. (2016). Brain-computer interface-based control of closed-loop brain stimulation: attitudes and ethical considerations. *Brain-Computer Interfaces*, 3(3), 140-148. <https://doi.org/10.1080/2326263X.2016.1207497>
- Rodriguez-Hart, C., Liu, H., Nowak, R. G., Orazulike, I., **Zorowitz, S.**, Crowell, T. A., ... Charurat, M. (2016). Serosorting and Sexual Risk for HIV Infection at the Ego-Alter Dyadic Level: An Egocentric Sexual Network Study Among MSM in Nigeria. *AIDS and Behavior*, 20(11), 2762-2771. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10461-016-1311-3>
- Widge, A. S., Licon, E., **Zorowitz, S.**, Corse, A., Arulpragasam, A. R., Camprodon, J. A., ... Dougherty, D. D. (2016). Predictors of Hypomania During Ventral Capsule/Ventral Striatum Deep Brain Stimulation. *The Journal of Neuropsychiatry and Clinical Neurosciences*, 28(1), 38-44. <https://doi.org/10.1176/appi.neuropsych.15040089>
- Widge, A. S., **Zorowitz, S.**, Link, K., Miller, E. K., Deckersbach, T., Eskandar, E. N., & Dougherty, D. D. (2015). Ventral Capsule/Ventral Striatum Deep Brain Stimulation Does Not Consistently Diminish Occipital Cross-Frequency Coupling. *Biological Psychiatry*, 80(7), e59-e60. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.biopsych.2015.10.029>
- Franklin, R., **Zorowitz, S.**, Corse, A. K., Widge, A. S., & Deckersbach, T. (2015). Lurasidone for the treatment of bipolar depression: an evidence-based review. *Neuropsychiatric Disease and Treatment*, 11, 2143-2152. <https://doi.org/10.2147%2FNDT.S50961>
- Lorince, J., **Zorowitz, S.**, Murdock, J., & Todd, P. M. (2015). The Wisdom of the Few? "Supertaggers" in Collaborative Tagging Systems. *The Journal of Web Science: Vol. 1: No. 1*, pp 16-32. <https://doi.org/10.1561/106.00000002>

CONFERENCE PROCEEDINGS

- Zorowitz, S.**, Momennejad, I., & Daw, N. D. (2019). Anxiety, avoidance, and sequential evaluation. *Reinforcement Learning and Decision Making*.
- Langdon, A. J., Hathaway, B. A., **Zorowitz, S.**, Harris, C. B. W., Winstanley, C. A. (2019). Insensitivity to time-out punishments induced by win-paired cues in a rat gambling task. *Reinforcement Learning and Decision Making*.
- Lorince, J., **Zorowitz, S.**, Murdock, J., & Todd, P. M. (2014). Supertagger behavior in building folksonomies. In *Proceedings of the 2014 ACM conference on Web science* (pp. 129-138). ACM.

CONFERENCE POSTERS

- Golway, N., Solomyak, L., Karni, G., **Zorowitz, S.**, ..., Eldar, E., Niv, Y., Hartley, C. (2023). Reliability of a Reinforcement-Learning Task Battery for Computational Phenotyping of Decision-Making in Adolescent Psychopathology. Presented at Computational Psychiatry Conference.
- Zorowitz, S.**, Tuominen, L. (2022). Adverse Childhood Events and Negative Symptoms in the General Population. Presented at Schizophrenia International Research Society.
- Zorowitz, S.**, Lane, P. L., Daw, N. D. (2021). The value of free choice in anxiety. Presented at Society of Biological Psychiatry.
- Paredes, N., **Zorowitz, S.**, Niv, Y. (2021). The psychometric properties of the Pavlovian Instrumental Transfer task in an online adult sample. Presented at Society of Biological Psychiatry.
- Zaller, I., **Zorowitz, S.**, Niv, Y. (2021). Information seeking on the horizons task does not predict anxious symptomatology. Presented at Society of Biological Psychiatry.
- Paredes, N., **Zorowitz, S.**, Niv, Y. (2021). The psychometric properties of the Pavlovian Instrumental Transfer task in an online adult sample. Presented at Society for Neuroscience Global Connectome.
- Zaller, I., **Zorowitz, S.**, Niv, Y. (2021). Information seeking on the horizons task does not predict anxious symptomatology. Presented at Society for Neuroscience Global Connectome.

Zorowitz, S., Bennett, D., Niv, Y. (2020). The Relation between Probability Weighting and Subclinical Anxiety in Decisions under Uncertainty. Presented at Society for Biological Psychiatry. New York City, New York.

Bennett, D., Radulescu, A., **Zorowitz, S.**, Niv, Y. (2019). Assessing mood's effects on attention in value-based decision making. Presented at Society for Affective Science. Boston, Massachusetts.

Widge, A. S., **Zorowitz, S.**, Afzal, A., Farnes, K., Paulk, A. C., Miller, E. K., Deckersbach, T., Cash, S. S., Dougherty, D. D. (2016). Deep Brain Stimulation of Striatal White Matter Alters Top-Down Control Signals in Cingulate and Prefrontal Cortices. Presented at the American College of Neuropsychopharmacology, Hollywood, Florida.

Sitnikova, T. A., **Zorowitz, S.**, Afzal, A., Gilmour, A. L., Ellard, K. K., Herrington, T. M., ... Deckersbach, T. (2016). Oscillatory synchronization enables dynamic information processing to resolve reward seeking vs. risk avoidance conflict. Poster presented at the Society for Neuroscience, San Diego, CA.

Zorowitz, S., Afzal, A., Deckersbach, T., Ellard, K. K., Gilmour, A. L., Dougherty, D. D., Eskandar, E. N., Widge, A. W. (2016). Bayesian State-Space Modeling of Reversal Learning. Poster presented at the Society for Neuroscience, San Diego, CA.

Afzal, A., **Zorowitz, S.**, Ellard, K. K., Widge, A. S., Gilmour, A. L., Dougherty, D. D., Eskandar, E. N., Deckersbach, T. Neural Correlates of Approach-Avoidance Behavior in Decision Making. Poster presented at the Society for Neuroscience, San Diego, CA.

Afzal, A., **Zorowitz, S.**, Ellard, K. K., Widge, A. S., Gilmour, A. L., Dougherty, D. D., Eskandar, E. N., Deckersbach, T. Neural Correlates of Approach-Avoidance Behavior in Decision Making. Poster presented at the Society of Biological Psychiatry, Atlanta, GA.

Zorowitz, S., Franklin, R., Kunwar, P. S., Greve, D. N., Block, S., Moran, L. R., Schwartz, C. E. (2016). A High-reactive Temperamental Profile in 4 Month-Old Infants Predicts Reduced Amygdala Volume and Increased Amygdala Reactivity in Adults. Poster presented at the Society of Biological Psychiatry, Atlanta, GA.

Widge, A. S., **Zorowitz, S.**, Tang, W., Miller, E. K., Deckersbach, T., & Dougherty, D. D. (2015). Behavioral and neural biomarkers of improved top-down control mediate clinical response to ventral capsule/ventral striatum deep brain stimulation in major depression. Poster presented at the Society of Biological Psychiatry, Toronto, Canada.

Invited Talks

- 2023 **Tel Aviv University**, Workshop for online neuroscience experiments (May 2023)
- 2023 **National Institutes of Mental Health**, Neural Computations in Learning Lab meeting (March 2023)
- 2022 **McGill University**, Psychiatric epidemiology journal club (October 2022)
- 2022 **Yale University**, Rutledge Lab meeting (June 2022)
- 2022 **Alena**, Science team meeting (May 2022)
- 2021 **University of Cambridge**, Blakemore Lab meeting (December 2021)
- 2021 **University of Amsterdam**, Theory Construction Lab meeting (October 2021)
- 2021 **Princeton University**, Parallel Distributed Processes meeting (March 2021)
- 2021 **Transcontinental Computational Psychiatry Workgroup**, (March 2021)

Mentoring

- 2023 **Allison Yang**, Junior project and senior thesis at Princeton University (co-advised with Nathaniel Daw)
- 2022 **Jen No**, Junior project and senior thesis at Princeton University (co-advised with Laura Bustamante)
- 2020 **Kiersten Marr**, Junior project and senior thesis at Princeton University
- 2020 **Livia Qoshe**, Junior project and senior thesis at Princeton University
- 2020 **Isabel Zaller**, Independent work at Princeton University
- 2020 **Natalie Paredes**, Summer internship at Princeton University
- 2017 **Katherine Link**, Summer internship at Harvard Medical School

Awards

- 2019 **Graduate Research Fellowship**, National Science Foundation
- 2019 **Student Travel Award**, Conference on Reinforcement Learning & Decision Making
- 2017 **Centennial Fellowship**, Princeton University
- 2016 **Top Poster in Translational Research**, Society of Biological Psychiatry

Skills

Quantitative	Bayesian data analysis, cognitive modeling, item factor modeling, item response theory, psychometrics
Programming	Python, R, Matlab, HTML, JavaScript, CSS, Bash
Software	Stan, JAGS, Jax, Pytorch, jsPsych