



Australasian Human Development Association (AHDA) 2019 Zoom Conference Highlights

AHDA's first online conference in 2019 (held via Zoom) was very successful with 52 registrations and 22 presentations on the day. A total of 10 institutions across Australia and New Zealand were represented in attendance. The conference included 2 keynote presentations from Professor Susan Danby and Professor Melanie Zimmer-Gembeck. Many thanks to all presenters and our keynotes for their valued involvement.

Some screenshots of presentations are included below:

Infants' Understanding of Overarching Goals as Constraints on Action
 Michaela Droesl and Alla Martin
 Victoria University of Wellington

DISCUSSION
 Eleven-month-olds did not encode the actor's specific object goal in the presence of an overarching goal context. However, they did encode a specific object goal when the actor could not see the overarching goal context. This may suggest that infants interpreted the overarching goal as constraining the actor's specific object goals. Infants consider the broader context in which an actor's choice occurs, including contextual clues about an overarching goal.

FUTURE DIRECTIONS
 Are infants considering the functions of the objects, or are they considering which objects go together?
 Does the overarching goal have to be relevant to the actor's choice for infants to take it into consideration?
 Do infants need direct experience with the objects used in order to interpret an overarching goal?
 How does this understanding of overarching goals develop?

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT
 We would like to thank the Victoria University Infant and Child Cognition Lab members for their help in running these studies.
 We would also like to thank the families who volunteered to participate in our research.

REFERENCES
 1. Woodward, A. L. (1998). Infants selectively encode the goal object of an actor's reach. *Cognition*, 69(2), 1-34.
 2. Sommerville, J. A., B. Crane, C. C. (2009). Ten-month-old infants use prior information to identify an actor's goal. *Developmental Science*, 22(2), 234-242.
 3. Luo, Y., & Adams, S. C. (2009). Resegregating the role of perception in action at 8 months. *Developmental Science*, 22(1), 142-149.

Key Findings

- Linear age-related EF deficit observed on BREFT

- At high and low aerobic, sig. age-related mental flexibility deficit
- At moderate aerobic, no age-related performance discrepancy
- At high and low RT, sig. age-related mental flexibility deficit
- At moderate RT, no age-related performance discrepancy

Better choices through more optimal use of prior knowledge in healthy older adults
 Roderick Garton, Angus Reynolds, Mark R. Hinder & Andrew Heathcote
 Psychology Division, College of Health and Medicine, University of Tasmania

Funding: ARC Discovery Grant DP-14532346 to Prof. Andrew Heathcote, and Future Fellowship FT 15010446 to Dr. Mark R. Hinder
 Publication: Garton, R., Reynolds, A., Hinder, M. R., & Heathcote, A. (2019). Equally flexible and optimal response bias in older compared to younger adults. *Psychology and Aging*, 34, 871-880. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1037/xap0000309>

Cognitive Control in Action

Evidence for importance of connectedness

Attuned mental state utterances

- accurate comments on child's mental state
- semantically connected to child's conversational turn

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Social understanding

- ToM
- emotion knowledge
- visual perspective taking

(Ensor & Hughes, 2008; Loranjo et al., 2010, 2014; Meins et al., 2002, 2003, 2013)

Responsive, sensitive parenting

- Sensitivity to child cues and mental states
- Connected parent-child interaction

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Helping behaviour and concern for victims

(Newton, 2016; Pettygrove, 2013; Spinrad, 2006)

Adolescents and Appearance

- Conforming to societal standards of beauty is highly valued in Western cultures
 - » Children and adolescents learn this very early
 - » Especially for girls, but increasingly so for boys
- It's not so surprising that weight and body image concerns and appearance-related distress are common among adolescents
 - » Associated with many mental health problems
 - » Associated with many forms of disordered eating
- In recent large Australian surveys by Mission Australia, appearance is often endorsed as a top stressor for youth

Some anonymous feedback was provided after the conference.

What did you like best about the conference?

- I really enjoyed being able to listen to new and interesting research from the convenience of my own workspace. It was really easy to join the conference at any time of day, and I enjoyed virtually presenting my work!
- Seeing a variety of talks that were made accessible to students at no cost.
- The online format, which was a "selling point" for this rather novice presenter.
- I liked the diversity of presentations and really liked the Keynotes.
- Talks were scheduled in groups of similar topics, making it easier to sign on and off for just the talks that were relevant to oneself. It was a very cost-effective and environmentally friendly way to share research with other academics in a more personal way than just reading each other's work in papers.
- Not have to travel to a certain place to attend the conference.
- Seeing the presenters who were so enthusiastic and confident.
- Not having to travel to the conference - the convenience of being able to watch the presentations from home.

After the success of our first online conference, we would like to host another this year! Zoom has become a key platform for staying in touch during the current COVID-19 pandemic, and has allowed many meetings, presentations and workshops to continue, despite physical distancing measures and travel restrictions.

Please reach out at AHDAmembers@gmail.com if you would consider hosting or joining an organising committee for an online conference this year, or for our 2021 in-person conference.