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## A Study Of The Mental Mechanisms Which Lead People To Develop Risk Conducts That Are Used When Driving, Practicing Sex And Taking Drugs

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Article Date: 14 Oct 2007 - 0:00 PDT

    

Which are the mental mechanisms leading people to develop risk conducts such as illegal overtaking manoeuvres, practicing unsafe sex or to consume drugs knowing the consequences? Such is the aim of a group of scientists of the Department of Experimental Psychology and Physiology of Behaviour from the University of Granada (UGR) who are working on the project "Risk Behaviour: Cognitive, Emotional and Neuropsychological Foundations" (El comportamiento de riesgo: bases cognitivas, emocionales y neuropsicologicas), and which is subsidised with € 193,000 from the Project of Excellence of the Regional Government of Andalusia.

A total of 13 researchers, led by Andres Catena Martinez, Jose Juan Canas Delgado, Antonio Maldonado Lopez and Antonio Candido Ortiz, are participating in this study through which it will be possible to measure variables which have never been analysed before in this context (such as the cerebral activity) to predict and modify risk behaviours. In other words, the study conducted at UGR will help to determine the emotional state of the individual as well as to act upon it, relating the cognitive and emotional systems by studying its variables.

**A motorcycle simulator**

Researchers from UGR will study rash driving thanks to a motorcycle simulator provided by the company HONDA (Riding Trainer) which exposes the subject to a series of risk situations to see how subjects react to them. So far, the experiment has been carried out with students from the Faculty of Psychology at UGR, but it will be tested on a wider range of subjects after the summer. Researchers will use techniques such as hypnosis to modify the state of mind of the subject that is, to give them artificially a state of euphoria, sadness or tiredness. Then, they will be subjected to driving to see how they react.

Andres Catena Martinez and Jose Juan Canas Delgado highlighted that the results of this research project may have consequences in relation with risk prevention policies such as traffic, work risks or health (i.e. AIDS or drugs). Therefore, this project will help to evaluate the efficacy of the recent Spanish Law of Traffic and the introduction of the Spanish points-based driving license. Moreover, according to researchers from UGR, this study will allow a quick and accurate evaluation of the tendency to risk of candidates applying to job positions in which accidents occur frequently because of taking risk decisions, such as bus or lorry drivers.

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