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VISITING PROGRAM

# TSVP TALK

## Decision-Making in ADHD: Suboptimal and Noisy?

2025  
THU. **Sep. 11**

**15:00–16:00**

**HYBRID** L5D23, ZOOM



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All people make numerous decisions every day, and everyone occasionally fails to make the best choices. Some, including those with attention deficit/hyperactivity disorder (ADHD), make suboptimal decisions more often than others, as seen in unhealthy lifestyle choices, bad financial decisions, excessive risk-taking behavior, and academic procrastination. This paper aims to shed light on the association between ADHD and suboptimal decision-making. Traditionally, decision-making related to ADHD has been viewed as increased impulsivity and risk-seeking, leading to a preference for immediate and risky options. However, this perspective has been challenged by theoretical and experimental evidence showing opposite cases. To address this gap in the literature, we emphasize the difference between biased and suboptimal decision-making. Supported by various experimental and real-world data, we further propose that ADHD is not linked to biased choices favoring immediate and risky options but rather to choosing less optimal options, regardless of whether they are more or less immediate or risky. To account for this proneness, we propose that ADHD is linked to higher intra-individual variability (IIV) or noise in parameters that affect decision-making. In several studies, we tested a set of predictions based on the noise account and confirmed that ADHD is associated with greater IIV, as well as higher rates of transitivity violations across various domains, and that noisy, suboptimal decision-making correlates with each other. Investigating the link between ADHD and IIV could offer important insights into the cognitive and motivational characteristics of individuals with ADHD, pointing to new areas for clinical and educational assessment and interventions.

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