479

SOCIAL PLAY AND MATERNAL INTERVENTION IN FREE-RANGING RHESUS MACAQUES

A. Yanagi, C. Berman

The State University of New York at Buffalo (University at Buffalo), Buffalo, New York, United States

Presenter's Email: akieyanagi@hotmail.com

The extent to which immature free-ranging rhesus macaques understand social risk and use of foresight to avoid negative social outcomes is unclear. We describe an ongoing study on Cayo Santiago that examines the extent to which 2 year olds regulate their play behavior through the use of play signals in relation to various kinds of social risk. Because play and aggression employ similar behaviors, social play may provoke aggression between players or from third parties, especially mothers. One way for potential play partners to avoid miscommunication risk about playful intentions is through the use of play signals. We tested the following hypotheses: 1) that the risk of negative outcomes (play refusal, aggression or third party intervention) is higher when the partner's ages, ranks or sex differ, when they are distantly related and particularly when the younger partner's mother is present, and 2) that youngsters that initiate play under high risk conditions attempt to moderate risk by signaling more frequently or intensely. Preliminary results suggest that the youngsters are more likely to play with "risky" partners when their mothers are absent. The frequency of play signaling is also likely to be relatively high with risky partners. Finally, play intensity is affected by their partner's attributes and mother's presence. The results tentatively suggest that juveniles are sensitive to their social environment during play and use play signals to moderate play social risk.

Keywords: gestural communication, social cognition, social risk, mother-infant relationship