

(101) Do subjects maximize gain in search? Comparison of visual and nonvisual sequential decision making tasks Pedersini, Riccardo (Harvard Medical School & Brigham and Women's Hospital); Morvan, Camille (New York University); Maloney, Laurence T. (New York University); Horowitz, Todd S. (Harvard Medical School & Brigham and Women's Hospital); Wolfe, Jeremy M. (Harvard Medical School & Brigham and Women's Hospital)

We compared two sequential decision making tasks, a speeded visual search and an analogous unspeeded economic task. In both tasks the goal was to find a target among distractors in a series of visual displays. Since half the displays contained no target, the subject's challenge was to decide whether to break off the search in one display and go on to the next. Performance in the visual search task was near optimal. Surprisingly, performance in the superficially easier economic task was markedly suboptimal: subjects stopped searching too soon and were influenced by the outcomes of recent trials.