

Reading experimental papers effectively is somewhat of an art. It is hard to know what detail to focus on and what to gloss over, and how to glean the bottom line take-home message from a paper. Nevertheless, this should be your goal when you read a paper, especially a primary result one (rather than a review). You should ask yourself in the end: what was the take-home message here? If I remember one thing about this paper, what should it be? How can I summarize this paper in one sentence?

The purpose of the questions below is to help you get the most out of reading the Yogev et al. paper, but more than that, these illustrate 'focus questions' that you can ask yourself when reading any paper. Some (or all) of these focus points may be obvious, so feel free to ignore them, but I thought this might be useful nonetheless.

The idea is to make sure you can answer these questions (in general terms, not to great detail) for yourself as you go along the paper. If you have trouble with one of these you should reread the relevant paragraph, and/or consult additional resources to make sure an important concept is not left misunderstood.

Note: The latent inhibition (LI) paradigm in its simplest form is: preexpose a stimulus X, then compare learning of an X→US association in this preexposed (PE) group to learning of a X→US association in a nonpreexposed (NPE) group.

Questions:

- 1) What is overswitching? What is perseveration?
- 2) How can "immediacy theory" (Slazinger, 1983) explain both overswitching and perseveration?
- 3) How are LI and blocking related to schizophrenia (SCZ)?
- 4) What is the effect of amphetamine on LI and SCZ; on dopamine? Do these effects all fall together in some picture that makes sense?
- 5) What are the effects of APDs (anti-psychotic drugs) on LI and SCZ; on dopamine? How do these effects fit into the picture you formed in question 4?
- 6) What was the experimental design/manipulation? How did the experiment measure LI and overswitching?
- 7) What were the main experimental results? Did the patient groups exhibit more or less LI and overswitching compared to controls? (note that the numbers in the text are somewhat different from those in the tables.. I am not sure what is the reason for this inconsistency, but it is not just you imagining things ;-)) -- ignore it and look for the big picture and main results)
- 8) What has this experiment taught us about SCZ? What is the bottom line?
[For comparison, the one-sentence summary I wrote for myself is: "SCZ patients show normal LI (not acute phase here) but tendency to overswitch in positive symptom patients and underswitch in negative symptom patients"]