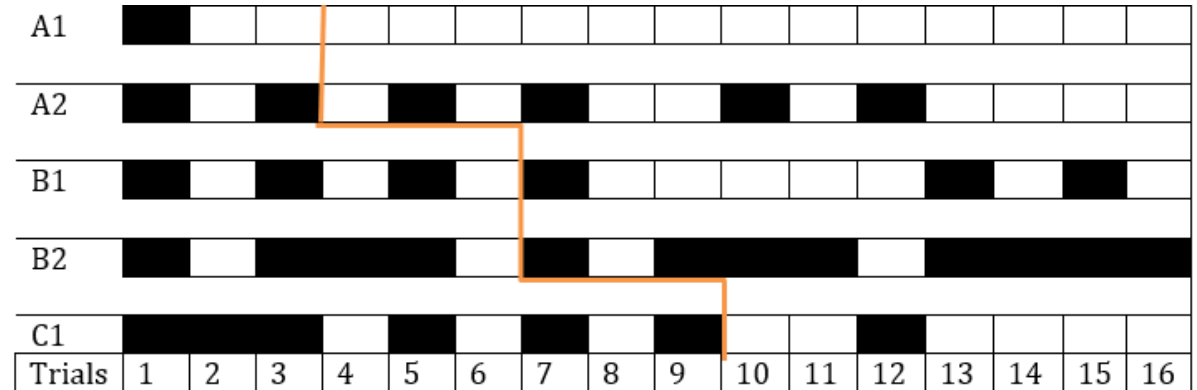


Piloting a Response-Cost Intervention for Aggression During Role-Play in a Multiple Baseline Design

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Introduction

- Intervening on aggressive behavior is difficult if the aggression is not stopped in the act.
- Previous behavior-change research has indicated use of behavioral procedures in simulated situations generalize to target situations.
- Response Cost (RC) procedures are well-researched behavioral techniques that decrease problem behavior by changing access to conditioned reinforcers.
- Due to potential aversive effects of response cost, a translational study (non-clinical) was designed to examine RC in simulation.
- The purpose of this study is to develop a procedure to test if response cost has an effect on aggressive choices in a live role-playing scenario, then assess if participants report and effect on out of game (self-reported) behavior.



Method

Participants

- Participants were recruited from the central New Jersey area and had experience with either Dungeons & Dragons or role-playing games.

Materials

- Dungeons & Dragons character creation
- Custom campaign

Experimental Design

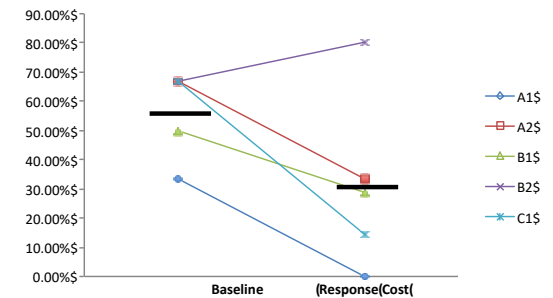
- Multiple baseline across subjects.

Procedure

- Participants created a character to play as in a live role-playing scenario where after baseline aggressive actions triggered the response cost (RC) contingency.
- Once in intervention aggressive choices triggered a response cost contingency.

Results

- Participant A-1 did not make contact with the RC contingency. They did not make an “aggressive” character.
- Participant A-2 contacted the RC contingency and a reduction in aggressive choices resulted.
- Participant B-1 showed a similar effect.
- Participant B-2 made almost all aggressive choices despite the RC contingency. They made an “aggressive” character.
- Participant C-1 showed a reduction in aggressive choices after RC was implemented.
- Three participants showed a reduction in aggressive behavior, one showed a reduction (not tied to the contingency), and one did not replicate the effect.



Discussion

- In the intervention phase and after contact with the RC contingency there is a reduction in aggressive choices being made.
- Possible moderators in character creation and emotional involvement.
- If the RC contingency can lead to changing behaviors in games, it might be able to lead to behavior changes in applied and clinical problem behavior situations.