

Response to gains or losses depends on age

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A U.S. study finds older adults have an asymmetric neural response to monetary gains and losses compared to the responses by adults aged 19-27 years.

Gregory Larkin and colleagues at Stanford University found adults older than 65 years have a lower response to losses but not gains, compared with the younger group.

While being scanned by functional magnetic resonance imaging both study groups had to respond to a cue either to get a monetary reward or to avoid a loss. On each trial, both groups also rated their positive or negative arousal at the prospect of a potential gain or loss.

The authors found while both the young and older adults had similar positive arousal at the prospect of an impending gain, the older group had less negative arousal to anticipated losses.

The findings, appearing in the June issue of the journal *Nature Neuroscience*, suggest older and younger adults might weigh gains and losses differently when making decisions.

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