Joint ventures play out

Researchers studied two people playing the roles of investor and trustee in a game of financial trust or betrayal. Distinctive patterns emerged in areas of the brain that are active in decision-making.

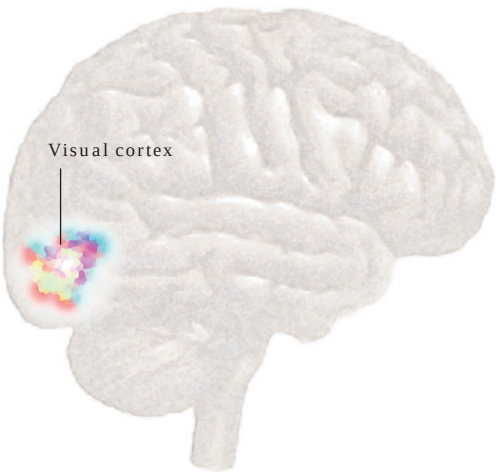
START (Both players)

Players are connected to MRI machines that image their brains as they interact. They repeat the game for 10 rounds, with each player winning points that can later be exchanged for money.

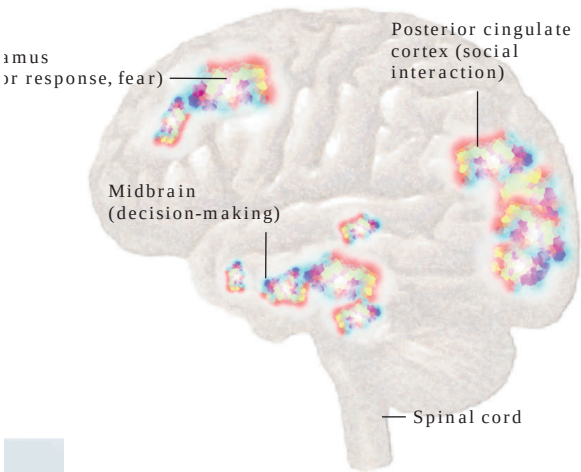
Player 1
Chooses a sum of money to invest.

Both players
Player 1's decision is revealed.

Player 1
The decision is no surprise, and brain activity is in the visual cortex only.



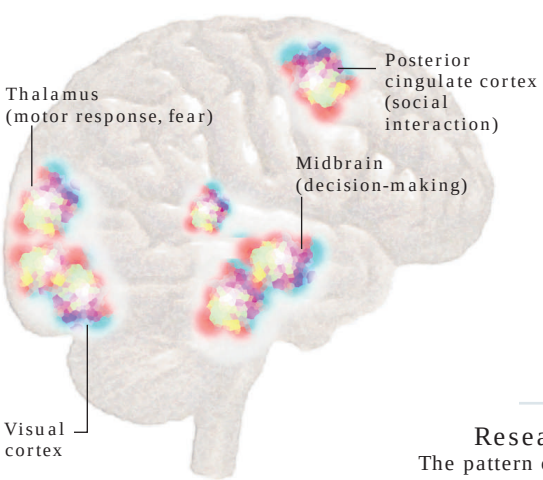
Player 2
Upon learning of the decision, experiences activity in areas of the brain associated with fear, decision-making and social interaction.



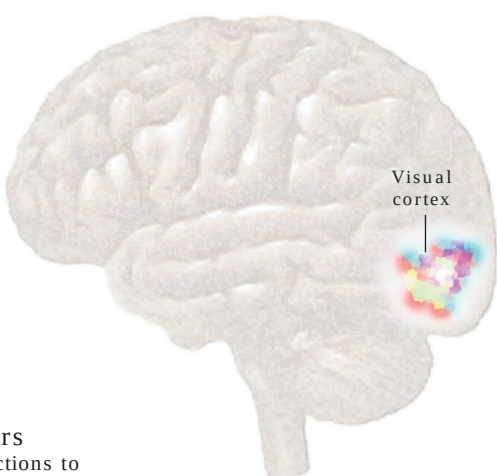
Player 2
Decides how to share profits with Player 1.

Both players
Player 2's decision is revealed.

Player 1
Upon learning of the decision, experiences activity in areas of the brain associated with fear, decision-making and social interaction.



Player 2
The decision is no surprise, and brain activity is in the visual cortex only.



Researchers
The pattern of reactions to potential betrayal and expressions of trust is analyzed.

Note: Although brain activity occurs on both sides of the brain, for simplicity, only one side is shown.

Source: Baylor College of Medicine

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