

Social Research Call

Title:

Threat/safeness perception, mind-body mechanisms of action, and behavior of youth during detention



Acronym: SafeTY

Project leader: Diana Ribeiro da Silva

Host organisation: University of Coimbra

Main purpose of the project: SafeTY aims to answer two research questions: 1) How do detained youth perceive their rearing environment and the detention across time in terms of threat/safeness? 2) Does the detention length and/or youth threat/safeness perception across detention have an impact on their (anti)social decision-making, simultaneous prefrontal cortex (PFC) functioning/connectivity, and behavior?

Design/methodology/approach: SafeTY uses a longitudinal design and a sample of 100 detained youth. Youth will be assessed at two time-points with an assessment protocol that encompasses multimodal indicators, i.e., sociodemographic/legal/criminal, psychological, neuropsychophysiological, and behavioral data.

Potential results: We hypothesize that youth will perceive their rearing environment marked mostly by threat experiences and lack of warmth and safeness experiences. We also expect a lack of warmth and safeness experiences of youth during detention. Regarding the second research question, we refrain from formulating hypothesis considering the novelty of this study.

Social relevance of the research: SafeTY can inform the clinical/societal need to reliably assess, address, and impact on current practices of juvenile detention on youth and to contribute to revolutionize the way researchers, clinicians, and policymakers look at juvenile detention; a unique opportunity to provide to these extensively traumatized youth a safe environment, crucial for their healing and rehabilitation.

Originality/value of the project: SafeTY is the first study to use a multimodal approach to assess threat/safeness perceptions of detained youth across time. SafeTY will made available a robust/cutting-edge methodology, combining an interactive computer-based neuroeconomic game and an ecological neuroimage technique to complement self-reports typically used in psychological research.