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Authors: Stephanie Fore, Fabrizio Palumbo, Robbrecht

Pelgrims, Emre Yaksi

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Information processing in the vertebrate habenula

Stephanie Fore ¹, Fabrizio Palumbo^{,1} Robbrecht Pelgrims^{,1}, Emre Yaksi¹

¹ Kavli Institute for Systems Neuroscience and Centre for Neural Computation, Norwegian University of Science and Technology, Olav Kyrres gate 9, Norwegian Brain Centre, 7491 Trondheim, Norway.

ABSTRACT

The habenula is a brain region that has gained increasing popularity over the recent years due to its role in processing value-related and experience-dependent information with a strong link to depression, addiction, sleep and social interactions. This small diencephalic nucleus is proposed to act as a multimodal hub or a switchboard, where inputs from different brain regions converge. These diverse inputs to the habenula carry information about the sensory world and the animal's internal state, such as reward expectation or mood. However, it is not clear how these diverse habenular inputs interact with each other and how such interactions contribute to the function of habenular circuits in regulating behavioral responses in various tasks and contexts. In this review, we aim to discuss how information processing in habenular circuits, can contribute to specific behavioral programs that are attributed to the habenula.

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