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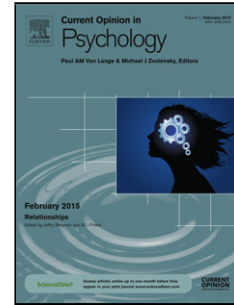
Title: What can rodents teach us about empathy?

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1 What can rodents teach us about empathy?

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5 Declarations of interest: none

6

7 Abstract

8 While many consider empathy an exclusively human trait, non-human animals are capable of
9 simple forms of empathy, such as emotional contagion, as well as consolation and helping
10 behavior. Rodent models are particularly useful for describing the neuronal background of
11 these phenomena. They offer the possibility of employing single-cell resolution mapping of
12 the neuronal activity as well as novel techniques for manipulation of in vivo activity, which
13 are currently unavailable in human studies. Here we review recent developments in the field
14 of rodent empathy research with special emphasis on behavioral paradigms and data on
15 neuronal correlates of emotional contagion. We hope that the use of rodent models will
16 enhance our understanding of social deficits in neuropsychiatric disorders characterized with
17 empathy impairments and the evolutionary continuity of the empathic trait.

18

19 Highlights:

- 20 • Sharing emotions is evolutionarily conserved and common for many species,
21 including rodents

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