

The ESRC Network for Integrated Behavioural Science is a partnership among the Universities of Nottingham, Warwick, and East Anglia. Visit us online at <http://www.behavioural-science.ac.uk>

Event News

In addition to supporting the SPUDM conference at Warwick, which we featured in our last newsletter, NIBS held its 'Autumn Workshop' in September. For the second year running this was hosted online but it still provided Network members with the opportunity to showcase research that was funded by NIBS, and seek input to planned research activity. NIBS still has some budget available for one or more events in the first half of 2022, and Management Group is currently discussing how best to use these funds.

Just before the start of term, NIBS Nottingham hosted a visit by George Loewenstein, who gave a lecture on 'fragile self-esteem'. Professor Loewenstein is Co-Director of the Center for Behavioral Decision Research at Carnegie Mellon University (CMU) in Pennsylvania. The two groups have close ties as CMU is a NIBS international partner.

Early Stage NIBS Research

There is plenty of research which hasn't yet been written up into working papers and submitted to journals. Here are some topics that were presented by NIBS colleagues at recent conferences, including the NIBS Workshop:

- Why do people pay not to go to the gym? Presented by Andrea Isoni
- Delegation preferences – humans versus computers. Lara Suraci
- The determinants of consumer engagement: valuing engagement. Presented by Ted Turocy
- Mobile Payments: Salience vs. Simplicity. Merle van den Akker

News in Brief

NIBS 1 Co-Investigator, Simon Gaechter (based at the University of Nottingham), secured €2.46 million from the European Research Council for Behavioural Principles of Large-Scale Cooperation (PRINCIPLES). The project began in September and runs for five years. It builds, in part, on work funded under NIBS1.

Two projects were awarded funding in the last round of the 'NIBS small grant' scheme:

- Time Allocation and Bracketing Behaviours
- To hide or not to hide? How fear and futility affect the decision to report a mistake

This brings the total number of projects funded through NIBS2 to over 30. You can find a list of all [funded projects on our website](#).

Nick Chater delivered the 4th Annual LSE Behavioural Public Policy Lecture, "What is the point of behavioural public policy?"

Big Tech: How can we promote competition in digital market platforms

With the growing market dominance of digital platforms like Amazon, Apple, Facebook and Google, calls for an effective policy response have become louder. New competition regulations are on the horizon, but international cooperation is needed for them to succeed. Find out more in this [Economics Observatory article by NIBS Co-Investigator Amelia Fletcher](#).

Gambling and Financial Distress

Work co-authored by NIBS researchers John Gathergood & Neil Stewart, published in *Nature Human Behaviour*, examines [the association between gambling and financial, social and health outcomes in big financial data](#).

For some, gambling is an ordinary pastime but for others it's associated with addiction and harmful outcomes, but evidence of harms tends to be limited to small samples of self-reporting surveys. This paper examines the association between gambling as a proportion of monthly income, and 31 financial, social and health outcomes. It uses anonymous data from a UK retail bank for more than 6 million individuals over 7 years.

Results show gambling is associated with higher financial distress and lower financial inclusion. It has negative impacts on lifestyle, health & well-being. For example, higher rates of gambling are associated with higher risks of future unemployment and, at the highest levels, gambling substantially increased mortality. The results will inform public debate over the relation between gambling and well-being.

Deceptive Communication

A new working paper by Daniel Read and former Nottingham PhDs, Valeria Burdea and Despoina Alempaki, examines [deceptive communication](#). Their experiment compares the rate at which a deceptive option is chosen depending on whether the deception involves a direct lie or being economical with the truth.

The results show that senders prefer to deceive through evasion rather than direct lying - an effect that may be driven by people seeking to avoid the psychological costs of direct lies. While it's good news that people find lying psychologically costly, the bad news is that previous studies may have underestimated peoples' propensity for lying by focussing on settings which only allow direct lies. The paper highlights a need for more research into lying in the context of naturalistic decisions.

Junior Researcher News

NIBS PhD student, Richard Mills (Nottingham), is working part-time as a Research Associate for NIBS on a project with Chris Starmer and Robin Cubitt. The team are developing work using a new experimental paradigm to examine time allocation behaviour. A first phase of work has identified high incidence of sub-optimal decisions and the work is now focussed on studying its causes.

Merle van den Akker (WBS PhD) was recently awarded her PhD. She already has a job offer but is just waiting on the paperwork. Congratulations to Merle!

Spotlight on..... Bruce Lyons

Bruce Lyons is Professor of Economics at the University of East Anglia (UEA) and a founding member of the [Centre for Competition Policy \(CCP\)](#) - which is a world leading inter-disciplinary centre focused on competition, regulation and consumer policy. Bruce has extensive experience in this arena and was a member of the EU's Economic Advisory Group on Competition Policy (2004-17) and the UK Competition Commission (2002-11). His current NIBS research is particularly focussed on understanding the implications of real consumer behaviour for competition policy.

In our last newsletter we highlighted Bruce's research with his NIBS colleague, Bob Sugden. They have been developing a framework to assess the fairness or unfairness of pricing strategies by firms. This involves a new concept of 'transactional fairness', which is based on theoretical ideas from Bob's book - [The Community of Advantage](#), but applied to policy issues. Their research is highly relevant for regulators and the pair have been invited to present to Ofcom, Ofgem and the FCA. You can [watch a presentation setting out some of their most recent thinking on YouTube](#) (video from CCP 2021 conference).