University of Birmingham

Jason Michael Thomas

ESRC Research Fellow

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About

I am interested in studying human eating behaviour using a variety of experimental techniques, including functional magnetic resonance imaging (fMRI), psychopharmacological manipulations, and novel behavioural measures of appetite and food intake.

Qualifications

B.Sc. Hons. Psychology

M.Res. Brain Imaging & Cognitive Neuroscience

Biography

I graduated with a degree in Psychology from Swansea University in 2008, after which I spent time as an Assistant Clinical Psychologist. I returned to research in 2009 to do a Masters at the University of Birmingham, and then a PhD in 2010. My PhD experimental work was undertaken both at Birmingham and at University of Oxford in collaboration with my industrial sponsor P1vital. I am presently a Research Fellow and fully trained Neuroimaging Operator at the University of Birmingham.

Teaching

I have taught Research Methods and Developmental Psychology, and presently run workshops on Good Experimental Practice.

Postgraduate supervision

I have mentored over a dozen undergraduate students, and supervised several masters students on research projects.

Research

Research interests

I am interested in the biopsychological aspects of human eating behaviour, and interventions aimed at altering food intake and food selection to improve health. I am particularly interested in psychopharmacological, cognitive, and social influences on human eating behaviour, and am presently researching a social norms approach to encourage healthier eating. My work has been funded by the BBSRC, P1vital, ESRC, and the University of Birmingham.

Other activities

Organisation

- Doctoral Researcher Development Award (DRDA) Manager, 2013
- Principal Organiser of Treatment of Obesity Conference (TOC), 2012
- Ingestive Behaviour Group Seminar Series Organiser (IBG), 2011 - Present

Awards

- Life & Environmental Sciences, Small Grant Award 2012 (£1000)
- Guarantors of Brain, Travel Award 2012 (£500)
- Experimental Psychology Society, Grindley Grant 2012 (£500)
- Hannah Steinberg Award, British Association for Psychopharmacology 2012 (£420)
- Nominated for and accepted onto the Excellence in Science Program 2012 (AAAS)
- Conference Bursary, British Feeding & Drinking Group 2010, 2011 & 2012

Professional Memberships

- British Association of Psychopharmacology (BAP)
- Association for the Study of Obesity (ASO)
- British Feeding and Drinking Group (BFDG)
- Society for the Study of Ingestive Behaviour (SSIB)
- American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS)

Publications

Thomas, J. M., Tomlinson, J., Hassan-Smith, Z., Dourish, C. T., & Higgs, S. (in preparation). Selective effects of the 5-HT_{2C} receptor agonist meta-chlorophenylpiperazine (mCPP) on intake of a palatable snack food in healthy female volunteers: correlation with regional brain activations measured by BOLD fMRI

Thomas, J. M., Higgs, S., & Dourish, C. T. (in preparation). Evaluation of The P1vital® Oxford Emotional Test Battery (ETB): effects of practice and satiety on measures of emotional processing

Thomas, J. M., Higgs, S., & Dourish, C. T. (in preparation). Monitoring Eating Behaviour in the Laboratory: do we need to do it covertly?

Thomas, J. M., Higgs, S., Dourish, C. T., Hansen, P., Harmer, C. J., & McCabe, C. (in preparation). Satiation attenuates activity in brain regions involved in reward and increases activity in an inhibitory control centre: an fMRI study with healthy volunteers.

Thomas, J. M., Tomlinson, J., Hassan-Smith, Z., Dourish, C. T., & Higgs, S. (submitted). Effects of the 5-HT2C receptor agonist meta-chlorophenylpiperazine on appetite, food intake and emotional processing in healthy volunteers.

Robinson E, **Thomas, J. M**., Aveyard, P., & Higgs, S. (submitted). What everyone else is eating: A systematic review and meta-analysis of the effect of perceived eating norms.

Robinson, E., Harris, E., **Thomas, J. M**., Aveyard, P., & Higgs, S. (2013). Reducing high calorie snack food in young adults: A role for social norms and health based messages. *International Journal of Behavioral Nutrition and Physical Activity, 10, 1-8.*1-8.

Higgs, S., Rutters, F., **Thomas, J. M**., Naish, K., & Humphreys, G. (2012). Motivational modulation of top-down attentional guidance: Enhanced capture of attention by food in working memory. *Appetite, 59*, 71-75.

Presentations

Thomas, J. M. , Tomlinson, J., Hassan-Smith, Z., Dourish, C. T., & Higgs, S. (2013). Effect of meta-chlorophenylpiperazine (mCPP) on appetite, satiety and fMRI BOLD signal in healthy volunteers. European Behavioural Pharmacology Society – La Rochelle, France

Thomas, J. M., Higgs, S., Dourish, C. T., Hansen, P., Harmer, C., & McCabe, C (2013).Effects of satiation on brain responses to rewarding and aversive stimuli. British Association for Psychopharmacology – Harrogate.

Thomas, J. M. , Tomlinson, J., Hassan-Smith, Z., Dourish, C. T., & Higgs, S. (2013). Behavioural & Neural Markers of Appetite Suppressant Drugs. National Institute for Health Research & Department of Health – Queen Elizabeth Hospital Birmingham.

Thomas, J. M., Higgs, S., & Dourish, C. T., (2013). Monitoring Eating Behaviour in the Laboratory: do we need to do it covertly? Oral Presentation, British Food and Drinking Group Annual Conference – Loughborough.

Thomas, J. M., Dourish, C. T., & Higgs, S. (2013). The Effect of Food Consumption on Brain Activity. The British Psychological Society “Psychobiological predictors of weight gain in susceptible young adults: What do we know, where do we go?” Research Day – University of Leeds

Thomas, J. M. , Tomlinson, J., Hassan-Smith, Z., Dourish, C. T., & Higgs, S. (2012). Effect of mCPP on appetite and food intake in healthy volunteers. Clinical Research Facility – Queen Elizabeth Hospital Birmingham.

Thomas, J. M. , Tomlinson, J., Hassan-Smith, Z., Dourish, C. T., & Higgs, S. (2012). Effect of meta-chlorophenylpiperazine (mCPP) on emotional processing and mood in healthy volunteers. Oral Presentation, British Association for Psychopharmacology – Harrogate.

Thomas, J. M. , Tomlinson, J., Hassan-Smith, Z., Dourish, C. T., & Higgs, S. (2012). The effect of meta-chlorophenylpiperazine (mCPP) on appetite ratings and food intake in healthy volunteers. Oral Presentation, Society for the Study of Ingestive Behaviour – Zurich.

Thomas, J. M., Dourish, C. T., & Higgs, S. (2012). An Experimental Medicine Model to assess the Efficacy and Safety of Novel Anti-Obesity Drugs. Oral Presentation, Treatment of Obesity Conference – Birmingham.

Thomas, J. M., Higgs, S., Hansen, P., Dourish, C. T., Harmer, C., & McCabe, C. (2012). An fMRI study of the Effect of Satiation on Responses to Food Pictures and Taste. Oral Presentation, British Food and Drinking Group Annual Conference – Brighton.

Thomas, J. M., Higgs, S., Dourish, C. T., Harmer, C., & McCabe, C. (2011). Effect of Satiation on Ratings of Rewarding and Aversive Taste Stimuli. Oral Presentation, British Food and Drinking Group Annual Conference – Belfast.

Thomas, J. M ., Naish, K., Humphreys, G., & Higgs, S. (2010). The Effect of Working Memory on Attention to Food. Poster Presentation, British Food and Drinking Group Annual Conference – Maastricht.

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