Consistency in boldness expression varies with ecological context in a jumping spider

Authors: Chia-chen Chang, Danielle A Klomp, Yusoff Norma-Rashid, Daiqin Li

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Description: Animals can adjust their behaviours depending on ecological context (i.e., behavioural plasticity), and an individual’s response to a given context may also vary from occasion to occasion (intra-individual variability). Recognizing the roles of both behavioural plasticity and intra-individual variability is important in understanding how behavioural diversity is maintained within populations. However, how the ecological context itself influences the individual behavioural response and intra-individual variability (e.g., how variable an individual is in their behavioural expression) remains largely unexplored. Here, we examine boldness expression (the duration of startle response) in a specialised spider-eating jumping spider, Portia labiata, across three contexts following a mild disturbance: presence of a conspecific intruder (most dangerous), environmental change but no conspecific intruder, and no conspecific intruder …