

Gambling rats help reveal science of risk

By Pam Belluck, New York Times

When people make risky decisions, like doubling down in blackjack or investing in volatile stocks, what happens in the brain?

Scientists have long tried to understand what makes some people risk-averse and others risk-taking. Answers could have implications for how to treat, curb or prevent destructively risky behavior, like pathological gambling or drug addiction.

Now, a study by Karl Deisseroth, a prominent Stanford neuroscientist and psychiatrist, and his colleagues gives some clues. The study, published Wednesday in the journal *Nature*, reports that a specific type of neuron or nerve cell, in a certain brain region helps galvanize whether or not a risky choice is made.

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