

## Master Thesis on 'Using videogames to validate human-animal comparison in cognitive tests'

In the study of animal cognition, we used many paradigms derived from human psychology. However, non-human animals are tested in a very different context: not receiving any instruction as to what they should do in an experiment. We know little about how humans perform in cognitive tests under the same conditions.

In our research, we developed a battery of five short videogames that simulate tasks we perform with non-human animals, on the topics of: inequity aversion, cooperation, inference, and altruism. We are testing people of different age groups on the games without giving them any instructions of what to do. We hope this will shed light on human-animal comparisons in cognitive tests, and how we can improve them.



**We are looking for two master's students from March 2025 onwards, who are interested in data collection and analysis, and writing a thesis on the data.** Our test sessions involve recruiting volunteers at Dörfles Wildpark and at the University of Veterinary Medicine of Vienna and applying the videogames battery.

### Potential topics include but are not limited to the following:

- Can humans figure out what to do in cognitive tests with no instruction?
- How does age affect the ability to solve cognitive tests in humans?
- Do humans help each other out without anything in return?
- Can humans reason by exclusion?
- Whether and how do people cooperate with each other?

### We offer:

- Gaining experience in cognitive research with humans
- Close supervision (in English)
- Learning to use heart-rate measurement methodologies

### Requirements:

- Study of psychology, neuroscience, cognitive science, biology, or related field
- Independent, committed, organised and responsible work
- Fluent **English** (and preferably German) skills
- Availability to test at Dörfles Wildpark (near Ernstbrunn, NÖ; <https://g.co/kgs/t5BCfch> )

If you are interested, please contact us at [dario.staric@vetmeduni.ac.at](mailto:dario.staric@vetmeduni.ac.at) and send your **CV** and a short **motivation letter (in English)**, **Transcript of Records**, and if applicable, references.