Litter and crowding effects on position learning by albino rats under low incentive motivation.
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AB In the 1st experiment reported, 68 male and female Sprague-Dawley albino rats from litters of 4 or 11 were placed 1, 2, or 4/cage for 44 days, at which time a position response was learned. Prior to learning, food was added to the home cages to reduce its incentive value. Under this condition, learning was not affected by density or litter size, although males learned faster than females. In the 2nd experiment, 138 Sprague-Dawley albino rats from litters of 4, 7, or 11 were placed 1, 2, 3, or 4/cage, with food added, for 59 days, followed by the same position training. Ss housed 1/cage were slower than some housed 2 and 3/cage to reach criterion. Females ran faster on the 1st 9 and criterion trials. Isolates were slower to 1st consume the reward, but ran faster than Ss housed 2 and 3/cage. Results may be interpreted in 1 of the following ways: the very poor performance by isolated rats accounts for these results; the addition of food did not reduce its incentive value; or learning by older rats is affected more by interanimal stimulation and that of younger rats by food incentive.