

# On the Utility of Understanding Behavioral Function

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# Understanding function

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By understanding the literature

By conducting a good assessment

By conducting a functional analysis

# Considerations in a school setting

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Before conducting an FA, be sure that medical concerns are addressed and that safety of student and staff is assured. For severe behavior, a school setting might not be appropriate for an FA.

Differentiating between socially reinforced behavior and automatically reinforced behavior is important (see Querim et al., 2013).

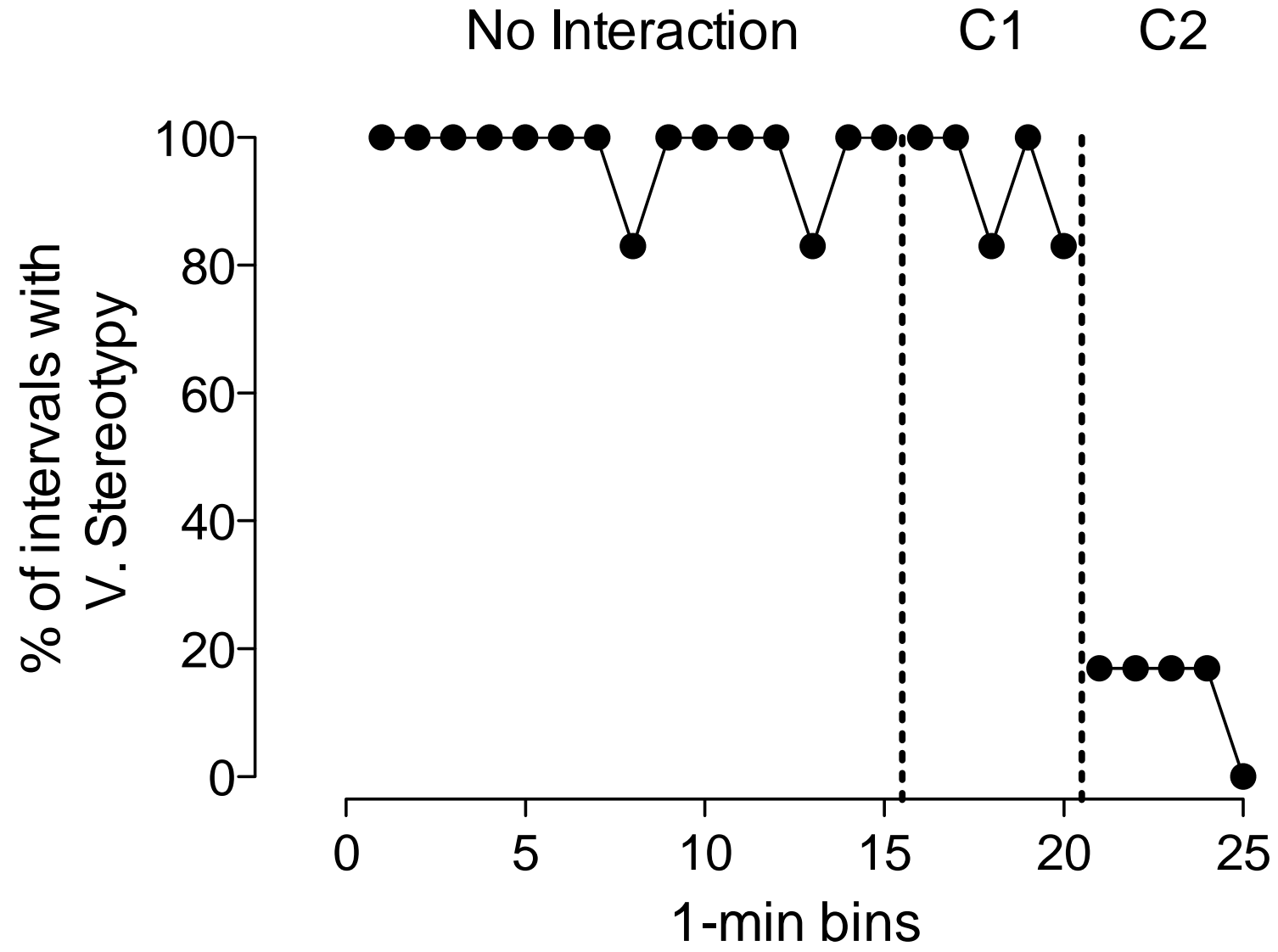
If socially reinforced, the literature is showing us that the use of positive reinforcement as treatment is important whether the behavior is maintained by positive or negative reinforcement (e.g., Slocum & Vollmer, 2015).

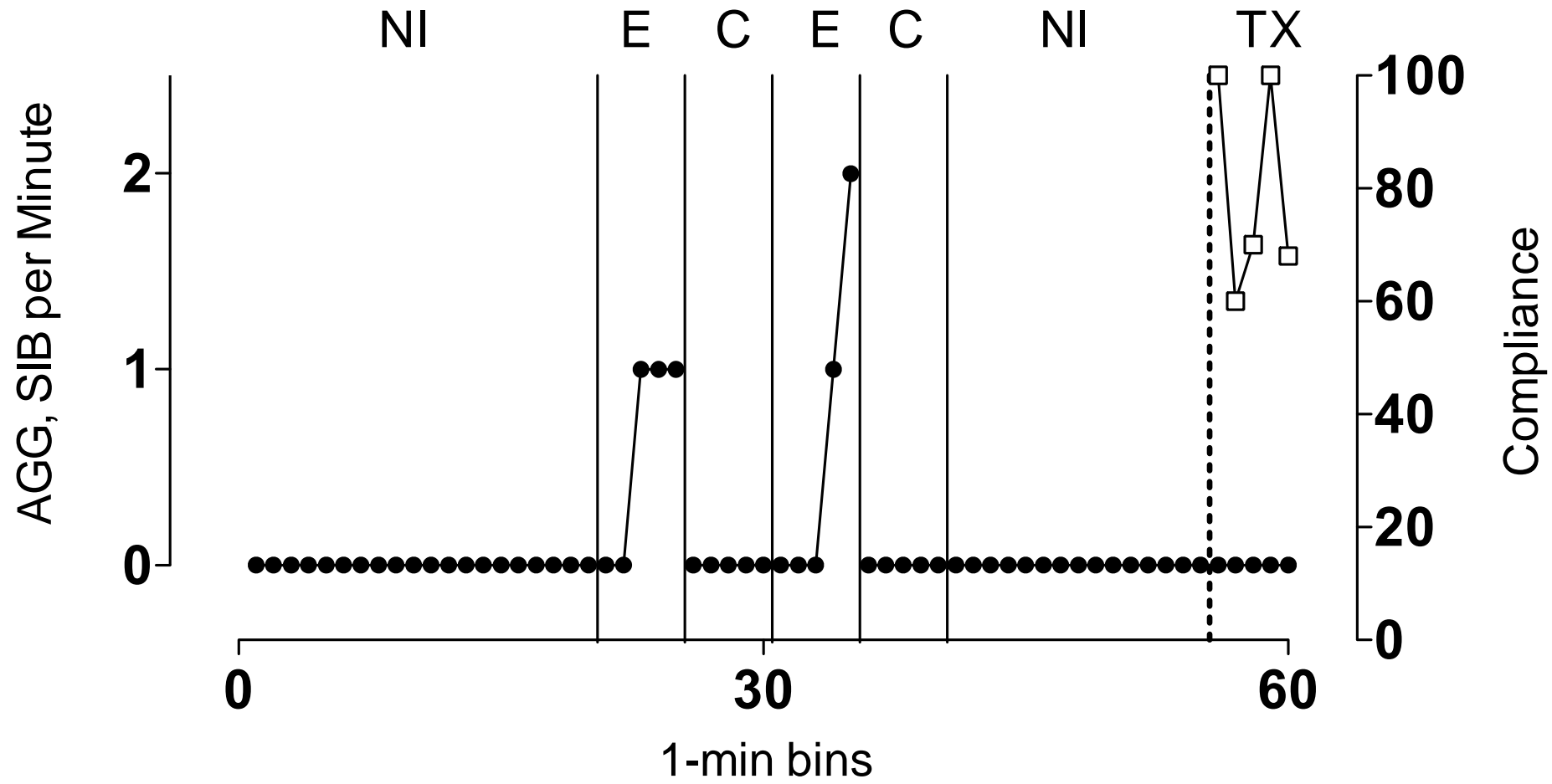
There is a simple rule of thumb to follow for treatment: minimize reinforcement for problem behavior, maximize reinforcement for appropriate alternative behavior (e.g., Athens & Vollmer, 2010).

If automatically reinforced, the prognosis is usually not as good, but recent work is showing that such behavior falls into at least two categorical types. For one, the prognosis is actually quite good (Hagopian et al., 2015).

Extensions of Querim et  
al. (2015)

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# References

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