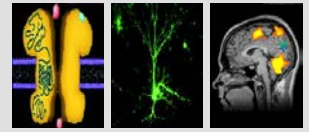IGSN / SFB 1280 / BIOME
# CONFERENCE

# EXTINCTION LEARNING:
## THE NEURAL, BEHAVIOURAL, ONTOGENETIC, EDUCATIONAL, AND CLINICAL MECHANISMS

**April 24 - 25,  2018**   Veranstaltungszentrum,  Ruhr University Bochum

Wednesday        April 25,  9:15 – 12:05

**Session 3**   **Emotional processing – Mechanisms of fear regulation**

## PAUL PAULI

Department of Psychology I, Julius-Maximilians-University Würzburg, Germany

## Acquisition, extinction and generalization of contextual anxiety

Exaggerated reactivity to unpredictable threat has been proposed as a crucial factor in the etiology and maintenance of most anxiety disorder, including panic disorder (PD). We developed a virtual reality (VR) context conditioning paradigm which may be used to examine brain responses associated with contextual anxiety as well as reinstatement and generalization of contextual anxiety. Interestingly, we repeatedly found that contextual anxiety more easily generalizes on an explicit level (rating) than on an implicit level (startle response modulation). First studies with high risk participants with either elevated levels of trait anxiety or with panic attacks revealed that facilitated conditioning of contextual anxiety as well as its generalization might be risk factors for anxiety disorders.

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