E&B Seminar Series

SCHOOL OF BIOLOGICAL SCIENCES THE UNIVERSITY OF HONG KONG 香港大學生物科學學院 | SHKU Science | ECOLOGY & BIODIVERSITY

On the origin of disgust: primate responses to pathogen threats

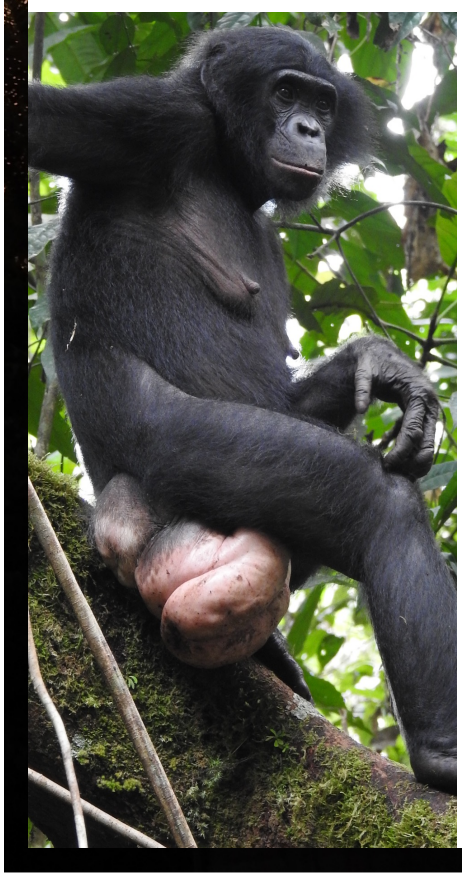
Date	**27th May (Fri.)**
Time	**16:00 (UTC+8)**
Venue	**Zoom**

You can also email us to require the Zoom link (check SBS website→NEWS & EVENTS)

Disgust is an adaptive system hypothesized to have evolved to reduce the risk of becoming sick. It is associated with behavioural, cognitive and physiological responses tuned to make animals escape from and/or get rid of parasites, pathogens and toxins. Taking an interdisciplinary and cross-species perspective, I describe primate responses to simulated parasite and pathogen threats. Using field and lab experiments, behavioural observations and parasitological investigations, our work reveals that primates avoid biological contaminants through multiple sensory modalities, that variation in disgust-related avoidance behaviours tends to correlate with parasite infection, and that pathogen-associated sensory cues affect cognitive performance. Here, I discuss these variations in light of the ecology of the species but also of individual trade-offs. Finally, I propose a new framework linking the adaptive system of disgust in both wildlife and people to possible solutions for wildlife management and conservation.

All are welcome!

Dr. Cécile Sarabian is a cognitive ecologist fascinated by how animals deal with pathogen threats. Her research has mainly focused on primates to study the origins of human hygiene and disgust, via field and lab experiments. She obtained a PhD of Primatology at Kyoto University, where she subsequently occupied a post-doctoral position to investigate the cognitive and physiological responses to disgust and fear elicitors in chimpanzees.



She recently joined HKU's Applied Behavioural Ecology and Conservation lab, where she aims to develop applications of disgust-related avoidance behaviours in different contexts such as urban pests and animal tourism.

Organized by The Biology Graduate Student Association (BGSA)