

**P035**

*Foraging activation in the common wasp (Vespula vulgaris)*

**Davide Santoro**, Philip J Lester, Stephen Hartley

The absence of intra-nest signals and communication about food resources (recruitment) among social wasps is a brainteaser for biologists. In the present study, we tested the hypothesis that the common wasp (*Vespula vulgaris*) shares food-related information inside the nest and shows foraging activation (an increase in the probability of an individual leaving the nest as a result of information received from successful foragers). We controlled for local enhancement, eventual chemical trails at the food source and climatic variation. We find evidence that food choice and localization of resources in the field by naive foragers (newcomers) was assisted by information previously or simultaneously provided by experienced nestmates. This information was related to chemical cues associated to food and possibly to its location. Pilot flights might explain the observed patterns. At the trained nest, there was an information-mediated variation in the foraging effort at colony level when known resources were available. Reactivated, experienced foragers were the main responsible for the foraging traffic rate increase recorded at the nest. To our knowledge, this is one of the first studies demonstrating foraging activation in social wasps. Our data are excitingly consistent with the possibility of recruitment in this group of social insects.