A possible secret to a woman's bargain hunting brain found in junk food

When it comes to junk food, what's your favorite?

Let's say it's chocolate candy bars. **How do you decide** which candy bar to pick when you're standing in the candy aisle with at least 15 different chocolate candy bars? For some of you it may be an easy choice – it's your favorite one. **But what if your favorite is out-of-stock, how do you begin to evaluate among the remaining choices?** On the conscious level you may be making all kinds of decisions – nuts – no nuts, caramel – no caramel; crunchy and chewy – soft and melty.

But, little do you know that deep within your brain is a structure called the ***amygdalae***, where a small number of neurons seem to be evaluating your choice before you get to finalize your decision.

Researchers know that monkeys have the ability to evaluate objects which can be traced to occurring within their brain's amygdalae. The *amygdalae* are a paired almond-shaped neural structures which are part of your emotional network for fear and pleasure.

Intrigued by this ability for identifying value, **Dr. Rick Jenison**, a psychology professor at the University of Wisconsin, Madison, was able to study a small number of human subjects. These subjects originally were having electrodes used to locate the source of their severe seizures but were also willing to participate in an additional study.

Jenison asked his subjects to **view (one second only) 50 images**

of junk food and then to subjectively value the item by placing a bid from zero up to three dollars.

When electrodes were used to register responses from individual neurons, it was found 16 of 51 neurons showed greater activity as the value bidding increased. But, there was also reverse activity where value bidding went up but neuron activity decreased.

While this is all very preliminary and done with a small number of subjects, it is suggestive that **neuron cells within your brain may appear to be able to make value choices which become part of your decision making process**.

This may turn out to be the hidden secret as to why bargain hunting women love to shop. Some of their *amygdalae* neurons are getting turned on with all the value/price comparisons that go into a purchase.

Sounds like it might be **as good an excuse as any when it comes to explaining your bargain hunting behavior**.

Now you can say your neurons made you buy it.