

Beneficial effects of human altruism

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Abstract

In this work we review converging evidence from several lines of research which suggests that altruism in humans can be intrinsically rewarding. Various investigations illustrate how human altruism can have beneficial effects on health and wellbeing. In this contribution we propose a model that includes positive effects of altruism. These beneficial effects lead to significant changes in the dynamics of the system, favouring higher levels of altruism and facilitating abrupt changes towards cooperation. In the present model, social modulation occurs at both individual and collective levels. The potential beneficial role of altruism proposed here may account for its occurrence among non-kin and beyond reciprocity.

Highlights

We suggest that human altruism can be beneficial for health and wellbeing. We present a model which includes a positive component of altruistic behaviour. Benefits help to explain altruism high frequency beyond kinship and non-reciprocity.

Keywords : Cooperation; Plasticity; Cultural conditioning