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‘Patterns of cooperative behaviour in bacteria and birds’

ABSTRACT

Cooperation presents a challenge for the Darwinian understanding of how natural selection operates: why help others when you could help yourself? However, the success of cooperative societies can be seen all around us, and throughout nature - how can we explain the evolution of cooperative societies, and how are they maintained in the face of exploitation and cheating? I have tackled these issues in my research using experimental evolution in bacteria and analyses of cooperative behaviour in birds. In my talk, I will describe insights that have come from these two very different approaches and finish with describing clinical applications of my work to the treatment of bacterial infection.