The role of counterfactuals in choice and outcome evaluation
Prof.ssa Ilana Ritov, Hebrew University, Jerusalem

Abstract
In this talk I shall review a body of empirical studies suggesting that evaluation of a decision outcome is determined not only by the obtained outcome, but also by comparisons to counterfactuals. These comparisons may involve previously experienced outcomes, expectations, or forgone opportunities. Anticipation of these ex-post evaluation patterns often affects preferences, as reflected in choice. A particularly frequent decision problem one faces is choice between acting and abstaining from action. An example of such a decision that has been extensively discussed is the vaccination problem. While omission may stem, in some cases, from explicit rules about action, in most cases it appears to be due to anticipated outcome evaluation, and the impact of counterfactual comparisons.

Short Curriculum Vitae
1998-2001: Senior Lecturer, School of Education and Department of Psychology, Hebrew University
2001-: Associate Professor, School of Education and Department of Psychology, Hebrew University.
Research interests: Descriptive analysis of individual decision making; evaluation of public goods and public policies; cognitive processes in negotiation.

Selected References