

Virtual News Briefings at APS 2022 Convention

May 25, 2022



APS will host two virtual news briefings featuring a small number of particularly compelling talks selected from among the approximately 1,600 accepted presentations at the [2022 Annual Convention](#) of the Association for Psychological Science (APS), held May 26 to 29 in Chicago, Illinois. These events will allow journalists to hear from and ask questions of the presenters without needing to travel to the convention.

Topics will include the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on education, tools to support ethnic and gender minorities, fake news and misinformation, romance and relationships, and more. Videos of the briefings will be posted on the APS [Virtual News Room](#).

Press Briefing 1, May 27, 10 a.m. CDT: Effect of Abuse on the Brain, Helping Minorities Cope With Stress, Pandemic and Academic Stress, Reading Aloud to Boost Intelligence, and Epigenome and Childhood Development

- **Scars of Childhood Abuse Are More Than Skin Deep: Trauma Changes White Matter Pathways in the Brain:** Studies have shown that childhood verbal abuse can damage white-matter pathways, or tracts, of the brain, leading to mental health disorders such as depression, anxiety, and PTSD. The impact of physical abuse, however, has not been well understood until now. Researchers from the University of Nebraska–Lincoln examined the association between

childhood trauma due to physical abuse and poor integrity of microstructures in the white-matter areas of the brain, including the tracts that connect the limbic system, which is involved in behavioral and emotional responses. The new findings revealed that as trauma experience increased, the integrity of white-matter tracts connecting the cortex with the limbic system decreased. These results may shed light on how traumatic physical abuse leads to emotional and behavior problems later in life. **Title:** Relationship Between History of Physical Abuse and White Matter Tract Integrity in the Brain. **Authors:** Keyoor Joshi, Matthew Brooks, and Hideo Suzuki, University of Nebraska–Lincoln; Maurizio Bergamino, Barrow Neurological Institute

- **Web App Helps Sexual and Gender Minority Youth Cope With Stress:** LGBTQ+ young people are more than twice as likely as their heterosexual and cisgender peers to experience moderate to severe depressive symptoms, due in no small part to stress arising from stigma and discrimination. These mental health disparities are compounded for racial and ethnic minority LGBTQ+ youth, who may face multiple intersecting sources of discrimination. Providing LGBTQ+ youth with preventative, web-based support can meet them where they are, validate their identities, and help them cope with discrimination. A team of researchers reports results of a randomized controlled trial of a web app called imi, which was designed to improve sexual and gender minority adolescents' mental health by encouraging identity affirmation and strengthening coping skills. The initial results show that psychosocial interventions delivered via this web app boost positive coping skills and mindsets that are important for helping racially and ethnically diverse LGBTQ+ youth deal with stress. **Title:** Identity-Affirming Content and Coping Skills Delivered Via a Webapp Supports Sexual and Gender Minority Adolescents' Ability to Cope with Sexual and Gender Minority Stress. **Authors:** Emma Bruehlman-Senecal and Jana Haritatos, HopeLab Foundation; Seul Ki Choi, Jesse Golinkoff, Jesse Golinkoff, and José Bauermeister, University of Pennsylvania
- **Pandemic-Induced Academic Stress Associated With Test Anxiety Regardless of Students' Gender, Race/Ethnicity, or Parental Education:** The COVID-19 pandemic changed how students learned and how they felt about testing—and not for the better. A new study compared how U.S. college students felt about testing and their general computer skills before and during pandemic-affected semesters. Even accounting for demographic differences, students with greater pandemic-induced academic stress tended to have higher general test anxiety and less confidence in their computer skills. These findings contribute to a growing understanding of differences in students' educational experience during COVID-19 and hold implications for developing better, more equitable assessments in future remote and online learning environments. **Title:** Test Anxiety, Computer Self-Efficacy, and Pandemic-Related Stress in Educational Assessment Contexts. **Authors:** Teresa Ober, Matthew Carter, and Ying Cheng, University of Notre Dame
- **Reading Aloud to Children Shown to Boost Intelligence:** Reading aloud to children can forge strong bonds between adults and children and has been shown to bolster language skills during formative years. A new study of Italian school children aged 6 to 12 found that, compared to those who engaged in only regular instruction, those who were read to for 1 hour per day fared far better on several intelligence tests at the end of 4 months. The researchers concluded that a

rigorously implemented program of reading aloud can significantly improve intelligence. **Title:** Reading Aloud to Children Enhances Their Intelligence: Evidence From a Cluster-Randomized Trial. **Authors:** Emanuele Castano, University of Trento; Federico Batini and Toti Giulia, University of Perugia; Bartolucci Marco, University of Parma

- **Mom's Stressful Life Events During Pregnancy May Alter Baby's Epigenome and Impact Childhood Development:** Grief, social conflict, and mental, sexual and physical abuse may leave a lasting imprint on the next generation's epigenome (modifications to DNA that can impact gene function). A new meta-analysis of cord-blood DNA taken from 5,500 pregnant women revealed that life stressors experienced during pregnancy are associated with changes to the fetus's epigenome in regions previously associated with neurodevelopment and schizophrenia, potentially affecting its development. These results provide compelling evidence that biomarkers of maternal stressful life events may shed light on neurodevelopmental processes in children. **Author:** Anna K. Ruehlmann, University of Cincinnati College of Medicine
- **Late Addition: Aggression Among Young Adults Exposed to School Violence During Childhood:** Childhood exposure to violence correlates with increased rates of hostility, which are associated with heightened reports of aggressive behavior. The current study found that hostility fully mediated the relationships between witnessing and experiencing school violence during childhood and aggression in young adulthood. **Authors:** Casey Altomaro and Kristine M. Jacquin, Fielding Graduate University

Press Briefing 2, May 28, 11 a.m. CDT: Stress in the Operating Room, Personality Shifts, Love and Hate, Fake News, and Talking Longer

- **Is Your Surgical Team Under Stress? Senior and Junior Team Members Feel Stress at Different Times:** In the operating room, mistakes due to stress can be deadly. Most measures of surgical-team stress, however, have been based on self-reports, which can yield unreliable data. A new study involving heart rate monitors found that stress in the operating room was felt differently among senior and junior members of the team. Senior surgeons showed increased heart rate only when they were operating; junior surgeons exhibited increased heart rate regardless of whether they were operating or merely observing. Interestingly, when senior surgeons showed increased heart rate, junior surgeons' heart rate decreased. Also, scrub nurses experienced more stress when junior surgeons were in control. These findings demonstrate the importance of social influences on stress in the operating room. **Title:** Physiological Responses of Surgical Teams During Low-Risk and High-Risk Operations. **Authors:** Kareena del Rosario and Tessa West, New York University; Wendy Mendes, University of California, San Francisco; Peter Gogalniceanu, Guy's and St Thomas' NHS Foundation Trust
- **Personality and Thinking Ability Aren't as Permanent as We Thought:** Who we are and how we think can change daily, challenging long-held understandings in personality and cognitive psychology. A 75-day study from the University of Michigan investigates how the lived experiences of 115 adults changed from day to day. Cognitive skills such as visualizing how objects rotate in space as well as remembering and generating lists of words were found to fluctuate across days in ways linked to some aspects of personality, especially how open-minded

people are. These results suggest nuance in generalizing single measurements of personality and cognition over time and provide a push for more long-term work to incorporate daily context into developmental and educational decisions. **Title:** Describing Me Today: The Person-Specificity of Relations Between Cognition and Personality Over 75 Days. **Author:** Dominic Kelly & Adriene Beltz; University of Michigan

- **Does Love Triumph Over Hate? It Depends on What You Mean By ‘Love’:** What “love” and “hate” mean can differ depending on a person’s cultural background. Love may seem like a positive emotion and hate to have negative implications, but this is not always the case; it is possible to love power and hate injustice, for example. A new study of over 800 people looks at the role culture plays in shaping attitudes toward these two emotions. Participants from Japan, Thailand, Sweden, and the United States filled out questionnaires, including free-written responses, to gauge how each country and culture perceives these emotions. Overall, U.S. and Swedish samples held a positive view of love, whereas Japan and Thailand held a more balanced view. Hate was viewed more negatively by people from all countries except Thailand, who saw hate in a more balanced way. **Title:** Cultural Influences on the Perception of Love and Hate. **Authors:** Katherine Aumer, University of Hawaii West Oahu; Jun Sato, Hawaii Pacific University; Marc Jaksuwijtkorn, Roosevelt University; Kristin Gray, University of Hawaii West Oahu; Noah Fugett, University of Hawaii
- **I Don’t Care If It’s Fake News, I Believe It:** There has been a proliferation of fake news and accusations of fake news when facts contradict a cherished viewpoint. New research set out to determine how powerful genuine fake news is in crowding out facts in favor of a distorted accounting of reality. Five experiments show that fake news articles that participants knew were fake still changed their beliefs, political attitudes, and behavioral intentions. The effects lasted up to 9 days and resisted various corrective efforts. These findings have profound implications for misinformation research, media practices, and democracy. **Title:** Fake News Known as Fake Still Enduringly Changes Beliefs and Leads to Partisan Polarization. **Author:** Hui Bai: Stanford University
- **Time to End That Conversation? Not So Fast:** After breaking the ice at a social gathering, you strike up a lovely conversation that seems to have run its course. Should you end the interaction and move on to another or keep things going? New research suggests that people underestimate how much they will enjoy continuing an ongoing conversation and may end their conversations prematurely as a result. In four experiments, each with at least 50 pairs of participants, the researchers found that people tend to misjudge the trajectory of conversation, expecting their enjoyment to decline more rapidly than it actually does. According to the researchers, prolonging conversation is a gateway to closer relationships, yet people mistakenly assume they may run out of things to say and subsequently miss out on the enjoyment of longer-lasting conversations. **Title:** Keep Talking: (Mis)Understanding the Hedonic Trajectory of Conversation. **Authors:** Michael Kardas, Northwestern University, Kellogg School of Management; Juliana Schroeder, University of California, Berkeley; Ed O’Brien, University of Chicago