APS Announces Winners of 2023 Student Poster Awards

May 15, 2023

Above: Yifan Yuan (right, College of William & Mary) at the 2023 APS Annual Convention in May. Yuan received a Student Research Award for research suggesting that adolescents with greater emotional reactivity reported greater suicidal ideation.

See all coverage from the 2023 APS Annual Convention

A highlight of every APS convention since 1991 is the poster sessions, where hundreds of undergraduate and graduate students, along with psychological scientists at all levels, present their research and engage in discussions with interested colleagues. The following responses reveal the motivations and personal stories behind many of the best student posters accepted for APS 2023, May 25–28 in Washington, D.C., as selected by reviewers for the four categories of awards. Congratulations to all the student award winners!

Responses have been minimally edited for publication.

Related: Learn about the recipients of the 2023 Psychological Science and Entrepreneurship
2023 Student Research Award Recipients

The Student Research Award promotes and acknowledges outstanding research conducted by student members of APS. Learn more about the Student Research Award, including eligibility and how to apply.

On the Relations Between Intellectual Humility and Political and Religious Polarization

Shauna Bowes (Emory University)

This poster also received a Lilienfeld Award

What drew you to your research?

I am fascinated with understanding polarization susceptibility and identifying ways to reduce it. I think intellectual humility is one fruitful path to explore in this regard. Yet no research studies had examined whether intellectual humility was equally related to less polarization across belief domains and belief identities. If intellectual humility is a powerful way to reduce polarization, then it should be related to less polarization across beliefs and belief identities. Thus, I wanted to uncover whether intellectual humility was equally related to less political and religious polarization across belief identities (e.g., Republicans, Democrats, Christians, atheists).
What did the research reveal to you that you didn’t already know?

The research revealed that “polarization is polarization” in the context of intellectual humility. Relations between intellectual humility and polarization remained consistent across belief domains and identities.

What are your plans going forward?

I want to experimentally manipulate intellectual humility to ascertain whether it does indeed reduce polarization. I also want to recruit political and religious extremists to get a better handle on whether intellectual humility buffers against polarization even among those with strong commitments to their beliefs.

A Network Comparison of Sexual Dysfunction, Psychological Factors, and Body Dissociation Between Individuals With and Without Sexual Trauma Histories

Yen-Ling Chen

Yen-Ling Chen (University of Nevada, Las Vegas)

What drew you to your research?

I have always been interested in applying novel statistical approaches to the field of clinical psychology, with the goal of connecting science and practice to improve clinical assessment and treatment. I am trained in delivering trauma-informed care, and I aim to integrate knowledge about trauma into research and practices. This includes recognizing the widespread impact of trauma on an individual’s life experience. In this research project, our team is particularly interested in the impact of sexual trauma on both sexual and mental health.

What did the research reveal to you that you didn’t already know?
Dissociative symptoms are common in the context of traumatic stress. In this study, we identified a specific core symptom in the network—feeling separated from the body during sexual activity—that appeared to be related to sexual dysfunction in individuals with sexual trauma histories. Furthermore, results from this research provide preliminary evidence of gender differences in the relationship between sexual and mental health.

What are your plans going forward?

I am currently finishing my predoctoral clinical internship at UC Davis Medical Center. I plan to stay at UC Davis Medical Center for my postdoctoral fellowship starting this summer.

Intellectually Humble Science: Perceptions and Implications

Jonah Koetke (University of Pittsburgh)

This poster also received a Lilienfeld Award

What drew you to your research?

In our past work, we examined how people’s own levels of intellectual humility are associated with less biased information processing and therefore more productive conflict resolution. This current line of work takes this general idea but looks at it from another angle: How does seeing someone as intellectually humble impact our perceptions of them? Critically, we were interested in putting this in the important context of trust in science.

What did the research reveal to you that you didn’t already know?
In these studies, participants trusted scientists more when they were intellectually humble. I think this is important for us as we continue to write, conduct, and communicate research to members of the public. How can we express intellectual humility when sharing research?

What are your plans going forward?

For this line of work, we hope to identify strategies scientists can use to communicate their intellectual humility when talking to the public or the press. Outside of this line of work, I plan to continue researching antecedents and outcomes of moral and political conflict.

Examining the Association Between Self-Regulation and Suicidal Ideation in Adolescents: A Longitudinal Design

Yifan Yuan (College of William & Mary)

What drew you to your research?

My interest in youth suicidality research originated from my volunteering experience as a peer supporter, through which I met a young client who expressed their preoccupation with the possibility of attempting suicide later in life. During in-depth conversations with them, I observed how multiple (both long-term and short-term) factors throughout their life may have contributed to their thought. I became surprised at how current literature lacks an understanding of youth suicidality from a developmental psychopathology perspective and hoped to identify the risk factors along the developmental progression of youth suicidal thoughts and behaviors.

What did the research reveal to you that you didn’t already know?

My research suggested that adolescents with greater emotion reactivity reported greater suicidal ideation. Surprisingly, middle childhood self-regulatory factors (i.e., emotion dysregulation, autonomic
nervous system dysregulation) did not predict suicidal ideation in adolescence. Since emotion reactivity data were collected in early adolescence (age 13), whereas other self-regulatory factors were assessed in middle childhood (ages 8–10), one explanation would be that proximal risk factors were stronger predictors of adolescent suicidal ideation than distal risk factors.

What are your plans going forward?

This research is part of my senior thesis project. I hope to incorporate additional predictors (i.e., life stress, inhibitory control, demographics characteristics) into my future analyses. After graduating from William & Mary, I plan to pursue a master’s degree at San Diego State University and conduct research on irritability in children and adolescents. My long-term plan is to become a clinical psychologist and work toward promoting the well-being of youth as a lifelong pursuit.

2023 RISE Research Award Recipients

The RISE Research Award acknowledges outstanding psychological science research related to under-represented populations or conducted by students from diverse backgrounds. Learn more about the RISE Research Award, including eligibility and how to apply.

Women from Minority Ethnolinguistic Communities Struggle to Access United States Healthcare

Nuo (Lori) Chen

What drew you to your research?
As someone who is deeply concerned about issues related to women’s health and well-being, I was drawn to health equity research because I believe that there is still much work to be done to ensure that all women have access to the care and resources they need to thrive. I have been struck by the lack of attention given to the healthcare needs of minority women, who are often overlooked or marginalized in mainstream healthcare systems. This issue hits particularly close to home for me. I have witnessed firsthand the difficulties that my mother and grandmother faced when attempting to access the healthcare they needed due to a multitude of factors such as language barriers. My personal experience has fueled my passion for researching ways to improve minority women’s healthcare access and outcomes. By providing the foundational knowledge needed to develop strategies for overcoming these barriers, I aim to take one step forward to providing minority women with the care they need and deserve. Further, I hope my work sheds light on the unique challenges that exist within the healthcare system for minority women, encouraging policy changes that will begin to promote greater equity and inclusivity in healthcare.

What did the research reveal to you that you didn’t already know?

The findings have revealed a number of important insights into the issue of healthcare access for women from minority ethnic communities. A key finding involved differences within minority women’s access to healthcare. While race was a significant predictor of accessing healthcare for women’s health, differences were found between Asian and Black/African American women. This was particularly noteworthy, as it suggests significant disparities in women’s healthcare access even between minority groups.

Another important finding was the interaction between race and naive language in predicting access to healthcare for women’s healthcare. Black/African American women who spoke English were found to access healthcare significantly different from Hispanic women who spoke Spanish, as well as from Chinese/Chinese American women who spoke Cantonese or Japanese. This highlights the importance of considering both language and race in understanding the barriers that women from minority communities may face when seeking healthcare. Overall, these findings have provided me with valuable insights into the complexities of healthcare access for women from minority ethnolinguistic communities. They underscore the need for a more inclusive and equitable healthcare system that takes into account the diverse needs and experiences of all women.

What are your plans going forward?

My initial work led to several intriguing questions for future investigations. First, I plan to delve deeper into the entwined roles of culture and language within minority ethnolinguistic communities as they relate to healthcare. Specifically, I would like to investigate the impact of cultural values on healthcare access and outcomes for minority women. Further, cultural values and languages are often deeply embedded within one another. Therefore, investigations into the interaction between language and culture in shaping healthcare access and experiences among minority women are needed.

Furthermore, my initial study was limited to women in a specific age range (40–55). Though it is possible that differences between majority and minority ethnolinguistic communities only appear in a very specific period within the lifespan, I would instead hypothesize that across a wider age range women’s age influences healthcare access. Therefore, I plan to expand my work research to include...
women across a broader age range. This will provide a more comprehensive understanding of the factors that contribute to disparities in healthcare access and outcomes. I am looking forward to beginning graduate school in developmental psychology at the University of Michigan’s College of Literature, Science, and the Arts in the fall of 2023. I will be a member of the Language & Literacy laboratory and advised by Dr. Ioulia Kovelman.

**Some Ethnoracial Groups Are More Likely Than Others to Experience Impacts from Microaggressions**

*Monica Echols (Fielding Graduate University)*

*What drew you to your research?*

I was drawn to this topic because I have often found myself on the receiving end of microaggressions, having experienced them countless times. As a result of my personal experiences, I can attest to the damage they can cause. There have been instances when I believe that the perpetrator of the microaggression did not realize that their behavior was offensive, but that did not diminish the harm done.

*What did the research reveal to you that you didn’t already know?*

The results gave me a deeper understanding of how microaggressions negatively impact groups such as Asian and Hispanic Americans. Upon further reflection, I came to the realization that I too have been guilty of committing microaggressions against others. It has become increasingly clear to me that it is crucial for us to acknowledge and educate ourselves on this topic, as the repercussions of microaggressions can be detrimental to individuals.

*What are your plans going forward?*
The Majority of Sexual Minority Men on Dating Apps Engage in Drunkorexia

What drew you to your research?

Throughout my graduate school training, I came to understand research as a pathway to enact justice. It became increasingly clear that research with marginalized and underserved groups needs to directly benefit members of those groups. Those individuals cannot wait for researchers to slowly accumulate volumes of theoretically based research articles before acting in a way that promotes justice.

As I dove into the existing research on both disordered eating and substance use, I was struck by how few articles focused on sexual minority men and the many problems that were present in the little research available. For example, much of the research ignored the diversity that exists within the male gay community. This was especially true for research on drunkorexia, which combined my two research interests but primarily used samples of college students. I became interested in expanding research on drunkorexia to a sample of sexual minority men to both gain a deeper understanding of drunkorexia and its predictors as well as determine the rates of drunkorexia among sexual minority men. I also wanted to know if drunkorexia was a community-reinforced behavior, and I wanted to assess for differences between subcultures within the male gay community.

What did the research reveal to you that you didn’t already know?
The majority of my sample endorsed engaging in drunkorexia, but overall perceptions of pressure to engage in drunkorexia across the sample were low. This was surprising, as existing literature suggests the presence of extensive anti-fat bias among sexual minority men. Additionally, nearly all participants endorsed belonging to a gay subculture, and there was quite a bit of overlap between subcultures. There is such little research on gay subcultures that I did not have any clear expectations regarding subculture membership prior to this study.

What are your plans going forward?

I am set to graduate with my PsyD in August 2023 and have accepted a post-doctoral position at the Louis Stokes Cleveland Department of Veterans Affairs Medical Center for specialized training in treating severe mental illnesses.

2023 Emerging Scholar Award Recipients

To celebrate the research and contributions of the APS Student Caucus members from diverse backgrounds, the Emerging Scholar Research Award recognizes individuals based on their personal statement, poster abstract submitted to the APS Annual Conference, and CV. Learn more about the Emerging Scholar Research Award.

Naturalness Shapes Support of Sustainable Technology

Sarah Gonzalez Coffin (University of Colorado, Boulder)

What drew you to your research?
From my earliest memories as a child, I remember the fires. Severe droughts induced by climate change, booming migration to California, and the rechanneling of water from the local Sierra Nevada Mountains to the southern affluent regions of the state left my rural northern mountain town vulnerable to fire disasters. Water restrictions, bans on water collection, and regulations plagued our lands, driving up water prices and exacerbating inequality of water access. My childhood town of Grizzly Flats has since burned down entirely as a side effect of the droughts, leaving a very personal imprint of climate disaster on my life. As the daughter of a Chiricahua Apache woman, I was raised with the teaching that humans and nature are meant to exist symbiotically. I recognized that climate change was a human-caused problem with a human-based solution. Despite this, I also realized that much of the work to address climate change did not emphasize the role that people play in successfully carrying out climate solutions. These experiences and beliefs instilled in me a drive to advance research in social psychology on how decision-making processes can shape public support of climate solutions, inform mitigation efforts for severe droughts and other climate disasters, and facilitate advancement toward a sustainable relationship between people and the planet.

What did the research reveal to you that you didn’t already know?

Our research finds that naturalness—or how “nature-like” sustainable technologies are perceived to be—is positively related to public support of technology in the United States. In fact, across 16 different sustainability technologies (e.g., alternative proteins, low-carbon energy, carbon dioxide removal), we saw that when U.S. residents saw technologies as more natural, they also saw them as more beneficial, familiar, understood, and less risky. These findings are exciting, as they suggest that naturalness is a key factor the public is considering in making decisions about climate change adaptation and mitigation technologies across a number of domains.

What are your plans going forward?

I aim to secure a tenure-track position at a research-focused university. My dream is to one day have my own research lab, where I will work with graduate and undergraduate students in studying the intersection of psychological decision-making and the way we relate to the natural environment. As an Indigenous woman and a first-generation graduate student, I look forward to continuing my work in reducing barriers for underrepresented researchers to join and contribute to the field of social/environmental psychology.

Within-Person Combinations of Individual, Familial, Neighborhood and Structural Factors Differentially Relate to Antisocial Behavior and Legal System Involvement
What drew you to your research?

The devastating impact of the health disparities disproportionately impacting low-income, Black, and minoritized communities was something I witnessed first-hand growing up in government-assisted housing in St. Paul, Minnesota. Many of the members of my community experienced the effects of community gang violence and mass incarceration. In addition to keeping Black people in my life entrapped within the criminal legal system, these experiences negatively affected their mental health. Although there was great need, they often lacked access to mental health treatment. These painful experiences inspired me to seek opportunities to combat mental health disparities. Specifically, research served as a way for me to better understand systemic causes of violence and to aid in intervening upon them. My experiences and the experiences of those from my family and community bolster my desire to continue researching the impact of systemic oppression, specifically by the criminal legal system, on marginalized communities with the purpose of informing actionable, policy-level change that targets inequitable and violent structures.

What did the research reveal to you that you didn’t already know?

Prior studies in this area have provided valuable understanding of the relationship between various individual, familial, neighborhood, and structural factors and antisocial behavior. Much of this work, though, focuses on one factor at a time or the interaction between two factors. My research reinforces the significance of these factors but expands upon the existing literature by exploring the intersectional interplay among individual, familial, neighborhood, and structural factors. We found that representing factors across multiple levels of analysis revealed distinct intersectional combinations among factors and associations with different subtypes of antisocial behavior.

What are your plans going forward?

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I am interested in using an integrated conceptualization of risk and protective factors across levels of analysis (from the individual to the structural) to aid in the development of targeted interventions. Ultimately, I would like my work to be used to facilitate collaborations across stakeholders (e.g., community members, practitioners, policymakers) to create interventions that prevent people from becoming entrapped in the legal system.

**Comparing Network Structures of Depressive Symptoms and Covariates between Females and Males in a Large Cross-Sectional Sample**

*Christopher Huong (The University of Texas at San Antonio)*

**What drew you to your research?**

Many experiences and books have led me to understand that studying psychopathology was my calling. One of those experiences was volunteering for the suicide and crisis lifeline. Understanding the varieties of human misery is a crucial component to the successful promotion of individual and societal flourishing.

**What did the research reveal to you that you didn’t already know?**

Understanding how the structure of symptom networks compare between groups, such as sex, revealed how depression may be uniquely experienced, and how risk factors and treatment strategies may differ.

**What are your plans going forward?**

I plan to pursue a PhD in clinical psychology and a career in academic research.

**Factors That Influence Black College Students’ Perceptions and**
What drew you to your research?

This project was motivated by many facets of my research, clinical practice, and values as a graduate trainee in clinical psychology. My research program strives to increase and improve mental health service utilization among Black emerging adults given the well-documented barriers to care, and I designed this study with the goal of sharing research findings back to the participants and the institution of study. This interest was furthered once I reviewed the literature suggesting that while racial disparities in mental health service use exist between Black emerging adults and their White peers, these disparities may be less prominent in college counseling centers. After conducting research focused on Black emerging adults and serving as a trainee in the university counseling center, I became even more interested in what factors inform Black college students’ decisions to seek care from this accessible treatment option and the ways in which these factors relate to core components of the participants and college counseling center (e.g., stigma, perceived therapist cultural competence). Given the importance of understanding how Black students actually experience these college counseling centers, the study also asked students to share what areas of strength and growth they identified when receiving care. My hope was that these findings could help college counseling centers understand how to best encourage Black students to utilize their services and ensure their services address the needs of Black students once they make it through the door. In short, this study reflects my priorities as an applied researcher and clinician who seeks to improve the systems meant to ameliorate distress.

What did the research reveal to you that you didn’t already know?

Many things, but to choose one, it was illuminating to better understand Black college students’ perceptions of their college counseling center measured in the quantitative survey aligned with the self-
reported perceptions described in the qualitative interviews. For example, when discussing the accessibility of their college counseling center, many students I interviewed noted that though they understood the college counseling center as a highly recommended, centrally located health service, they did not fully understand the specifics what the center offered. For some students, this lack of clarity about the center’s services made it difficult to see how it could effectively help them when they were experiencing distress. This finding, coupled with others from both phases of the study, suggests there are distinctions between being aware of a university entity and how its functions are directly relevant to one’s experience. As someone who seeks to serve Black and other marginalized students through my research and clinical practice, it was a great reminder about the importance of explicitly describing the nature of counseling center services and setting expectations for students new to therapy.

What are your plans going forward?

Over the past six months, I have conducted and analyzed semi-structured individual interviews with a subset of participants who completed the quantitative survey. Given this is my dissertation research, I’m in the process of writing up the final document in preparation for my dissertation defense this year. Following my defense, I plan to prepare this research for publication and disseminate the findings to relevant stakeholders at the institution of study and the participants themselves.

2023 Scott O. Lilienfeld APS Travel Award Recipients

This award seeks to honor and extend Scott O. Lilienfeld’s influence on the next generation of clinical scientists by recognizing graduate student poster-presenters at the APS Annual Convention each year. Learn about Scott O. Lilienfeld and the travel award in his name.

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Shauna Bowes (Emory University)

This poster also received a 2023 Student Research Award

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**Intellectually Humble Science: Perceptions and Implications**

*Jonah Koetke* (University of Pittsburgh)

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*What drew you to your research?*

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**A Panel Network Approach to Understanding the Interplay of Substance Use, Mental Health Problems, and Executive Functioning Throughout Adolescence**

*René Freichel* (University of Amsterdam)

No responses received
A fourth category of APS Student Awards is the **Psi Chi | APS Albert Bandura Graduate Research Award**, which honors Albert Bandura with a competition for the best research by a graduate student in empirical psychology. The recipient of the 2023 award had not been announced at the time of writing. Learn about Albert Bandura and the research award in his name.

Return to top