

New Content From *Perspectives on Psychological Science*

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[Does Neonatal Imitation Exist? Insights From a Meta-Analysis of 336 Effect Sizes](#)

Jacqueline Davis et al.

Davis and colleagues conducted a meta-analysis of 336 effect sizes (found in 26 articles) to examine the existence of neonatal imitation—the capacity of newborns to copy others’ actions. They found significant evidence for neonatal imitation but a high degree of heterogeneity among the studies. These findings may indicate that (a) neonatal imitation exists, but its detection depends on methodological factors that this meta-analysis did not capture or (b) neonatal imitation does not exist, and the evidence that appears to support it is an artifact due to researcher bias and/or idiosyncratic practices in particular labs.

[From Gaze Perception to Social Cognition: The Shared-Attention System](#)

Lisa J. Stephenson, S. Gareth Edwards, and Andrew P. Bayliss

Stephenson and colleagues present the Shared-Attention System (SAS), a neurocognitive model that builds on previous models and approaches to encompass perceptual, cognitive, and affective processes that contribute to and result from the establishment of shared attention. Gaze and joint attention appear to be the building blocks of shared attention. When two people gaze in the same direction (i.e., look at the same object) and are aware of each other’s attentional state, they are in a shared-attention episode. These episodes can occur through intentional or incidental signaling and cause exchanges of information about the environment and each other’s mental states.

[What Do New Findings About Social Interaction in Autistic Adults Mean for Neurodevelopmental Research?](#)

Rachael Davis and Catherine J. Crompton

New findings suggest that social and communication difficulties among autistic adults can be influenced by mismatches in communication styles that also reflect nonautistic difficulties. Thus, deficit-based accounts of autistic social difficulties may be simplistic as they do not account for the bidirectional

nature of interactions between autistic and nonautistic individuals. Shifting to a difference-based view of autistic social difficulties, from a deficit-based view, could increase public understanding of autism, bridge the gap between different interaction styles, and provide opportunities for the inclusion of autistic individuals.

[The Practical Alternative to the \$p\$ Value Is the Correctly Used \$p\$ Value](#)

Daniël Lakens

Lakens argues that discussing which statistics researchers should use instead of the p value has distracted from the core question of asking researchers what they are hoping to learn when they conduct research. He highlights that preventing the misinterpretation of p values by developing better evidence-based education and user-centered statistical software should be a priority to improve researchers' statistical inferences. Lakens suggests that pursuing alternatives to p values is a form of escapism, and a more effective solution would be to educate researchers on how to ask better questions and correctly use the statistics available, including p values.

[A Dynamical Reconceptualization of Executive-Function Development](#)

Sammy Perone, Vanessa R. Simmering, and Aaron T. Buss

Perone and colleagues describe dynamic-systems theory and apply it to executive-function development. The authors adopt Doebel's (2020) conceptualization of executive function as skills using control to guide behavior according to context rather than a modular skill encompassing working memory, inhibitory control, and cognitive flexibility. Perone and colleagues explain that this view is similar to that proposed by dynamic-systems theory in that behavior reflects assembling multiple pieces in context. Thus, they use this theory to describe the multilevel nature of goal-directed behavior and its development, and they discuss implications to improve children's ability to engage in goal-directed behaviors.

[The Empirical Status of Mindfulness-Based Interventions: A Systematic Review of 44 Meta-Analyses of Randomized Controlled Trials](#)

Simon B. Goldberg, Kevin M. Riordan, Shufang Sun, and Richard J. Davidson

Mindfulness-based interventions (MBIs), usually involving focusing attention on the present moment, have been used to improve mental and physical health. Goldberg and colleagues reviewed 44 meta-analyses of randomized control trials to evaluate the effects of MBIs. When compared to passive controls (e.g., being on a waitlist for intervention), MBIs' effects were mostly positive but depended on population and problem (e.g., large benefits for anxiety disorders, very small benefits in children). When compared to active controls (i.e., other interventions), MBIs' superior benefits was inconsistent. Nevertheless, the use of MBIs appears to be at least partially supported by scientific evidence.

[Duchenne Smiles as Honest Signals of Chronic Positive Mood](#)

Kennon M. Sheldon, Mike Corcoran, and Melanie Sheldon

Duchenne smiles—involving the mouth and the eyes and signaling true enjoyment—might be honest signals of chronic positive mood (CPM), associated with social and health benefits. Sheldon and colleagues argue that the Duchenne smile evolved to signal high levels of CPM, alerting other

individuals to the psychological fitness of the smiler. The authors also suggest that eudaimonic activities (i.e., activities that involve high-quality goals and practices rather than mere hedonic activities that may not produce deep satisfaction) may produce CPM, and frequent Duchenne smiling may signal eudaimonic personality (e.g., valuing growth, community, and high-quality relationships instead of status).

[Neurodiversity and the Social Ecology of Mental Functions](#)

Robert Chapman

Chapman clarifies the neurodiversity perspective on mental functions, which posits that neurocognitive diversity is a normal and healthy manifestation of biodiversity and, therefore, minority cognitive styles should not be pathologized or seen as mental dysfunctions or impairments. The author uses the example of autism to illustrate how to apply an ecological model of mental functioning that takes into account group and individual functioning as well as the relations among functions. The ecological model allows researchers and practitioners to recognize a great variety of cognitive differences as natural human variations rather than dysfunctions or pathologies.