

# New Research From *Clinical Psychological Science*

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## [A Person-Centered Analysis of Craving in Smoking-Cue-Exposure Research](#)

*Michael A. Sayette, Madeline E. Goodwin, Kasey G. Creswell, Hannah J. Esmacher, and John D. Dimoff*



Sayette and colleagues analyzed data from 672 daily smokers who had been deprived of nicotine for 5–12 hrs before participating in one of seven studies in which they reported their urge to smoke before and during exposure to cues associated with cigarette use (e.g., lighting a cigarette). Sixty nine percent of participants reported a higher urge during cue exposure. However, 31% of participants reported maximal urge before cue exposure, classifying them as nonresponders in traditional cue-reactivity analyses. These results suggest that traditional analyses, centered on mean levels of cue reactivity rather than person-centered analyses, may underestimate cue-reactivity effects.

## [Obsessive Compulsive Symptoms Are Associated With Heightened Avoidance of Low-Probability, High-Aversion Threats: A Preliminary Test of the Improbable-Catastrophe Hypothesis](#)

*Christopher Hunt, Nikki Degeneffe, Johanna Bixby, and Shmuel Lissek*

This research suggests that individuals with obsessive compulsive disorder (OCD) appear to have a heightened sensitivity to improbable catastrophes—events that are both catastrophic and highly improbable (e.g., contracting HIV from a doorknob). Hunt and colleagues tested college students with varying levels of OCD symptom severity and found that, in a paradigm designed to elicit varying degrees of perceived threat probability and aversiveness, participants who had higher levels of OCD symptoms revealed greater threat expectancy, physiological reactions, and avoidance in the face of unlikely but highly aversive threats than participants with lower levels of OCD.

## [The Impact of Moral-Injury Cognitions on Psychological Outcomes in Refugees: An Experimental](#)

## [Investigation](#)

*Joel Hoffman and Angela Nickerson*

Beliefs regarding moral violations (moral-injury cognitions) appear to underlie the association between potentially morally injurious events (PMIEs; events that potentially transgress deeply held moral beliefs and often occur in a context of traumatic exposure) and psychological symptoms in refugees, this research suggests. Hoffman and Nickerson simulated a PMIE (an asylum seeker forcibly separated from their children) using mental imagery to investigate the impact of moral-injury outcomes in 71 Arabic-speaking refugees. Participants with preexisting high moral-injury beliefs about violations by oneself and/or others reported greater negative emotional responses after the PMIE simulation than those with lower moral-injury beliefs.

## [Examining Linear and Nonlinear Associations Between Negative Emotional Reactivity to Daily Events and Depression Among Adolescents](#)

*Angela C. Santee and Lisa R. Starr*

Negative emotional reactivity to daily events is associated with depression. To clarify this association, Santee and Starr tested negative emotional reactivity and depression among 232 adolescents for 7 consecutive days (i.e., cross-sectionally) and again 1.5 years later (i.e., longitudinally). After completing an initial depression assessment, participants rated their experience of emotions, daily hassles, and uplifts three times per day for 7 days. Depression symptoms peaked when their negative reactivity to daily hassles was either extremely high (heightened) or extremely low (blunted) and when their reactivity to daily uplifts was heightened (i.e., greater decreases in negative emotion). Heightened reactivity to daily uplifts also predicted worsening of depression 1.5 years later.

## [Climate Change and Children's Mental Health: A Developmental Perspective](#)

*Francis Vergunst and Helen L. Berry*

Vergunst and Berry review research indicating that threats associated with climate change might increase risk to healthy human development from the point of conception. They suggest that these nefarious effects on physical and mental health (e.g., famine, anxiety) are already occurring and that monitoring and mitigating them is a matter of social justice as well as crucial for developmental health. Highlighting the need for well-controlled studies, Vergunst and Berry discuss the conceptual and measurement challenges inherent in studies of climate-change-related exposures and children's mental-health outcomes. They also describe priority research areas that would clarify the mechanisms through which climate changes influence psychological health and well-being throughout development.

## [Psychopathy and Moral-Dilemma Judgment: An Analysis Using the Four-Factor Model of Psychopathy and the CNI Model of Moral Decision-Making](#)

*Dillon M. Luke, Craig S. Neumann, and Bertram Gawronski*

Luke and colleagues examined the relationship between psychopathy and responses to moral dilemmas that pit consequences for the greater good against adherence to moral norms. They examined how participants with varied scores in different facets of psychopathy showed sensitivity to consequences, sensitivity to moral norms, and general preference for inaction over action when responding to moral dilemmas. Individuals with higher psychopathy scores, especially in interpersonal and affective facets,

were less sensitive to moral norms. However, psychopathy was not associated with sensitivity to consequences or preferences for inaction over action. These findings suggest that the relationship between psychopathy and moral-dilemma judgments may be more nuanced than previous research considered.

#### [Evidence From the Trauma-Film Paradigm That Traumatic and Nontraumatic Memories Are Statistically Equivalent on Coherence](#)

*Andrea Taylor, Rachel Zajac, Melanie K. T. Takarangi, and Maryanne Garry*



This research suggests that traumatic memories are coherent and equivalent to nontraumatic memories (i.e., not fragmented and jumbled). Taylor and colleagues used a trauma-film-paradigm, in which participants viewed films that they later recalled, evaluating their memory's coherence. To properly norm the films used, Taylor and colleagues created a new set of materials that included two films of each of the following: traumatic events, negative events, positive events, and neutral events. They found that this new set of materials produced the intended effects and intensities, and that memories were fairly coherent and equivalent, regardless of whether they were traumatic.

#### [Education, Financial Stress, and Trajectory of Mental Health During the COVID-19 Pandemic](#)

*Yanping Jiang, Samuele Zilioli, Rhonda N. Balzarini, Giulia Zoppolat, and Richard B. Slatcher*



Jiang and colleagues explore how financial stress and educational disparities affected mental health in the initial months of the COVID-19 pandemic. They analyzed data from 2,204 participants in spring 2020. At the beginning of the pandemic, they found a relationship between lower education and worse mental-health outcomes mediated by increased financial stress. However, these relationships did not change over time. These findings indicate that addressing financial stress associated with pandemics might mitigate the relationship between educational disparities and mental-health outcomes.