

New Research From Clinical Psychological Science

December 18, 2015

Read about the latest research published in *Clinical Psychological Science*:

[The Effects of Attachment Priming on Depressed and Anxious Mood](#)

Katherine B. Carnelley, Lorna J. Otway, and Angela C. Rowe

Attachment theory suggests that people internalize the quality of early interactions with their primary caregivers, forming an attachment orientation that influences their perception of social interactions throughout their lives. Attachment insecurity has been associated with depression and anxiety; however, the evidence for this link is correlational. The researchers tested the causal relationships between attachment insecurity and depression and anxiety by priming participants with an anxious, avoidant, secure, or neutral attachment style and then testing them for depression and anxiety. Participants primed with an anxious attachment style reported higher depression, and participants primed with an avoidant attachment style reported more anxiety, than did participants primed with a secure attachment style. In a follow-up study, the researchers found that repeatedly priming attachment security led to decreases in anxiety in participants. According to the authors, these findings provide support for a causal link between attachment insecurity and depression and anxiety.

[Revisiting Depression Contagion as a Mediator of the Relation Between Depression and Rejection: A Speed-Dating Study](#)

Madeline L. Pe, Ian H. Gotlib, Wim Van Den Noortgate, and Peter Kuppens

People with depression are often rejected by those they interact with, possibly because they induce negative affect in their interaction partners. To examine whether social contagion might lead people to reject depressed individuals, the researchers had participants take part in a series of 4-minute speed-dating sessions. After each interaction, participants reported their emotions and their evaluation of their speed-dating partner. Interaction partners' depression was found to be related to decreases in participants' positive affect rather than increases in their negative affect. Positive affect accounted for the relationship between interaction partners' depression and rejection by participants. Although this finding does not support the depression-contagion hypothesis, it does indicate that people do not tend to enjoy interactions with people with high levels of depression and therefore are more likely to reject them.

[Stressful Life Events Moderate the Relationship Between Genes and Biased Attention to Emotional Faces in Youth](#)

Jessica L. Jenness, Benjamin L. Hankin, Jami F. Young, and Andrew Smolen

The researchers sought to clarify the relationship between specific genetic profiles and biased attention to emotion — a risk factor for the development of anxiety and depression — by examining whether experiencing stressful life events (SLEs) influenced the relationship of genetic variants of the 5-HTTLPR polymorphism and the catechol-O-methyltransferase (COMT) gene to attention bias to emotional faces. Children and adolescents were assessed for attentional bias, anxiety, depression, and the number of SLEs they had experienced in the past 3 months. Youth with the S/S 5-HTTLPR genotype who had experienced recent stress demonstrated an attention bias to negative emotions, and youth with the val/val COMT allele demonstrated avoidance of positive emotion. These findings demonstrate the important role environmental stress plays in the link between genetic risk and attention biases.