New Research From Clinical Psychological Science

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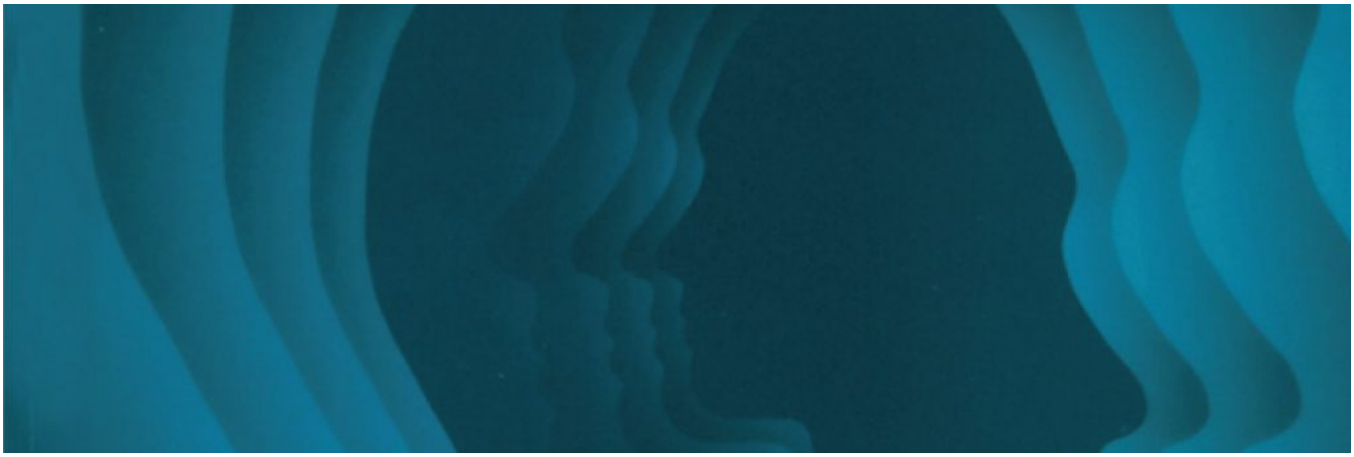

Read about the latest research published in *Clinical Psychological Science*:

The Multilevel Structure of Daily Emotion-Regulation-Strategy Use: An Examination of Within- and Between-Person Associations in Naturalistic Settings
Tierney P. McMahon and Kristin Naragon-Gainey

Emotion regulation — attempting to change the course of an emotion by modifying or maintaining its duration, intensity, or valence — requires different strategies, which vary within individuals across time and contexts. This study examined the application of emotion-regulation strategies by students without a history of mental-health treatment and individuals currently receiving or seeking mental-health treatment. Participants completed daily surveys (for 10 or 14 days) in which they identified their strongest daily emotion experience, rated their negative or positive emotion, and reported the strategies used to cope with that emotion. For both samples, strategies could be divided into two clusters: engagement strategies (e.g., acceptance, reflection, seeking social support), which were associated with fewer internalizing symptoms and higher positive affect; and avoidance strategies (e.g., avoidance, distraction, procrastination), which were associated with more internalizing symptoms and negative affect. However, at the intraindividual momentary level, strategies were grouped in four clusters for the student sample (attentional shift, acceptance, avoidance, and emotional expression) but only three for the clinical sample (acceptance was omitted, and such strategies were grouped with the avoidance strategies). Given these results, McMahon and Naragon-Gainey suggest that, in clinical settings, it may be best to track the use of strategies according to the grouping identified in the intraindividual analysis and focus first on reducing avoidance-related strategies.

Long-Term Memory in Adults Exposed to Childhood Violence: Remembering Genital Contact Nearly 20 Years Later
Deborah Goldfarb, Gail. S. Goodman, Rakel P. Larson, Mitchell L. Eisen, and Jianjian Qin

As accusations of decades-old child sexual abuse are allowed to be considered in court, it becomes important for scientists to assess the accuracy of adults' memory for childhood genital contact, Goldfarb and colleagues say. In this study, adults who had experienced an anogenital exam by a physician during the course of a maltreatment investigation when they were children (4–17 years old) were located and interviewed. During this interview, participants were asked to recall everything they could remember about the time they were examined as children, and to answer some specific questions (e.g., "Did the doctor examine your genitals?"), including misleading ones (e.g., "When the doctor gave you the shot/inoculation, where was it?" though participants did not receive an inoculation). Almost half of the participants remembered the genital touch, and the older they were at the time of the exam, the more likely they were to accurately remember it. Victims of child abuse and participants with greater depression in adulthood were also more likely to accurately remember genital touch during the exam. Some participants showed memory errors in the misleading questions, but no participant falsely reported chargeable offenses, even when those were included in misleading questions (e.g., being hit or kissed by the doctor). These results offer insights into whether adults can remember childhood facts and into how their accuracy is affected by life experiences (e.g., being a victim of sexual abuse or not) or psychopathology (e.g., depression).

Prenatal Risk for Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD): Fetal Cortisol Exposure Predicts Child ASD Symptoms

Sheena Ram, Mariann A. Howland, Curt A. Sandman, Elysia Poggi Davis, and Laura M. Glynn

Intrauterine experiences may influence the development of autism spectrum disorder (ASD): Low fetal exposure to the hormone cortisol may confer ASD risk for boys, this study suggests. Over the course of gestation, maternal cortisol increases, which is important for the maturation of the fetal organs, including the brain, and for the preparation of the fetus for labor and delivery. Ram et al. analyzed maternal cortisol levels at gestational weeks 15, 19, 25, 31, and 36+; 5 years later, they tested the children for ASD symptoms. Maternal cortisol increased over the course of pregnancy and did not differ for male and female fetuses. Lower maternal cortisol levels were associated with higher levels of ASD symptoms in boys. Thus, a dysregulation in maternal cortisol production, especially a low cortisol profile, may constitute a risk factor for ASD, a disorder that affects 1 in 68 children and is common in all racial, ethnic, and socioeconomic groups.