

# New Research From Psychological Science

July 24, 2015

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## [Turbulent Times, Rocky Relationships: Relational Consequences of Experiencing Physical Instability](#)

*Amanda L. Forest, David R. Kille, Joanne V. Wood, and Lindsay R. Stehouwer*

Can physical instability lead to instability in relationships? In three studies, participants who were in a romantic relationship completed assessments of relationship quality and stability, and expressions of affection, while experiencing conditions of physical instability (sitting at a wobbly desk, sitting on an unbalanced chair cushion, or standing on one foot) or physical stability (sitting at a balanced desk, sitting on a stable cushion, or standing on two feet). Participant's perception of physical instability was associated with the perception that their relationship was less likely to last and was of lower quality. Physical instability was also associated with fewer expressions of affection by participants toward their relationship partners. The authors hypothesize that physical instability may lead to personal insecurity and the withdrawal and distancing from relationships.

## [Culture Moderates Biases in Search Decisions](#)

*Jake A. Pattaratanakun and Vincent Mak*

Searching for items brings inherent costs (search time and effort) and benefits (finding the desired item). Examinations of real-world searches with Western participants have found that many people tend to deviate from optimal search strategies by undersearching. In a series of studies, the researchers had Thai, UK, or bicultural Thai-UK participants complete a series of searches for items of low or high cost. Although both Thai and UK participants undersearched when the costs were low, only Thai participants oversearched when the costs were high. A similar finding was discovered when cultural affiliation was primed in bicultural participants by manipulating the language used in the task. These findings indicate that cultural differences interact with search costs to influence search decisions.

## [Differential Effects of Oxytocin on Agency and Communion for Anxiously and Avoidantly Attached Individuals](#)

*Jennifer A. Bartz, John E. Lydon, Alexander Kolevzon, Jamil Zaki, Eric Hollander, Natasha Ludwig, and Niall Bolger*

People often think of oxytocin as promoting positive prosocial behavior; however, there are some people for whom oxytocin administration produces negative effects. Participants completed an attachment assessment prior to, and assessments of agency and communion following, an administration of intranasal oxytocin. Oxytocin was found to increase feelings of communion for participants who were

avoidantly attached and decrease feelings of agency for participants who were anxiously attached. This research suggests that oxytocin may have beneficial effects for people who are low in affiliation but negative effects for those chronically preoccupied with close relationships and maintaining their sense of agency.