New Research From Psychological Science

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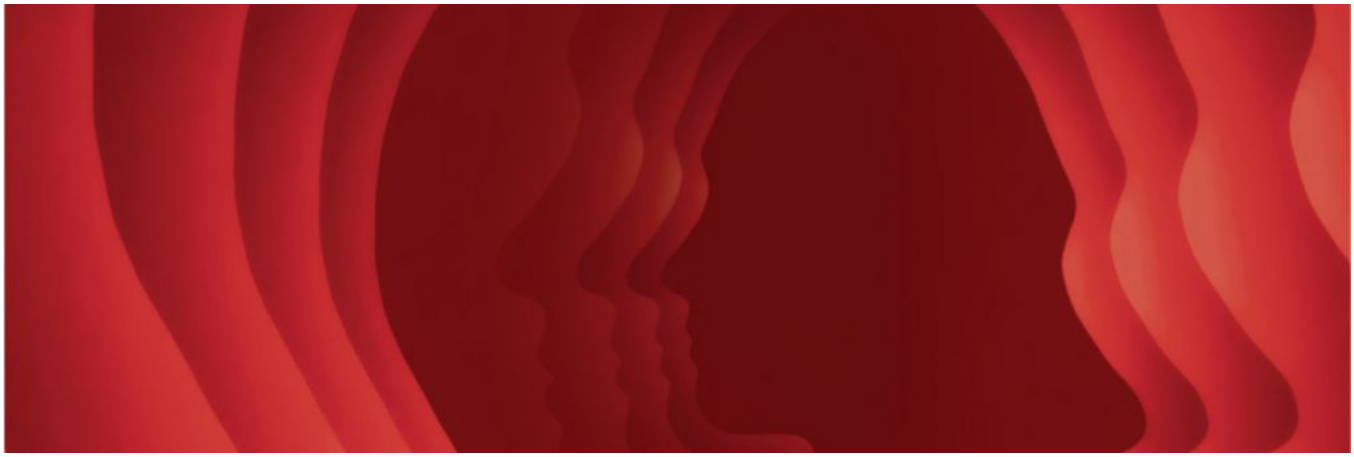

Read about the latest research published in *Psychological Science*:

Tracking Colisteners' Knowledge States During Language Comprehension
Olessia Jouravlev, Rachael Schwartz, Dima Ayyash, Zachary Mineroff, Edward Gibson, and Evelina Fedorenko

When we receive information in other people's presence, are we sensitive to what they are able and unable to understand? Two studies suggest that we are, but only when we have cognitive resources available. In two experiments, participants saw sentences preceded by a context; the participants were alone or in the presence of a confederate who had no access to the context. The information was plausible (e.g., "the bird had a little beak and yellow tail"), implausible (e.g., "the girl had a beak and a yellow tail"), or plausible given the context (e.g., "the girl had a little beak and a yellow tail," preceded by "the girl dressed up as a canary for Halloween"). Participants had to decide whether the sentences made sense (i.e., were plausible) while electroencephalographic (EEG) activity was recorded. Participants evaluated the context-dependent sentences as more implausible and showed more difficulty processing them (as measured by the EEG) only when the confederate was present. This effect did not occur when participants simply had to read the information or when they had to answer demanding comprehension questions. Thus, unless mental resources are limited, individuals seem able to track the perspectives of anyone present during a conversation, which is important for communicating and forming relationships.

Use of Face Information Varies Systematically From Developmental Prosopagnosics to Super-Recognizers
Jessica Tardif, Xavier Morin Duchesne, Sarah Cohan, Jessica Royer, Caroline Blais, Daniel Fiset, Brad Duchaine, and Fre?de?ric Gosselin

Some people are better than others at recognizing faces. What lies behind that ability? In an experiment

designed to address this question, Tardif and colleagues observed how participants used facial features to identify famous faces. The experimenters presented photographs of the faces using the bubbles method, in which different stimulus information is randomly sampled, and a process similar to multiple regression is used to identify the features that lead individuals to recognize a face correctly. This allowed the scientists to identify the features that lead individuals to recognize a face correctly. Individuals tended to use the eyes, eyebrows, and mouth to correctly identify the faces. Super-recognizers, who can easily recognize faces they have not seen in years, used all of these features, whereas individuals with developmental prosopagnosia, who show great difficulty recognizing faces, seemed to use only the mouth to identify the faces. Moreover, the researchers showed that during face recognition, super-recognizers and individuals with developmental prosopagnosia use different quantities of information but not different types of information compared with average face recognizers. Identifying such individual differences might offer insights for improving face processing in people with impaired face recognition and in people whose jobs require strong face-processing abilities, such as police officers or security agents.

Self–Other Agreement in Personality Reports: A Meta-Analytic Comparison of Self- and Informant-Report Means

Hyunji Kim, Stefano I. Di Domenico, and Brian S. Connelly

Individuals' own assessment of their personalities seem to resemble the opinion of others, despite a long-standing notion that individuals might view themselves more positively than others see them. In a large meta-analysis, Kim et al. compiled 152 studies that used self- and informant reports of an individual's personality on the Big Five personality traits (openness to experience, conscientiousness, extraversion, agreeableness, and neuroticism) and examined the discrepancies between the reports. They found that the mean ratings for each trait were similar in the self-reports and in the reports provided by family, friends, and colleagues. However, strangers' reports were less favorable than the self-reports, particularly for openness, suggesting that strangers may be more critical when evaluating someone. The findings suggest that people judge their own personality astutely, although individual and contextual differences in that judgment remains an open question, the authors say.