

New Research in *Psychological Science*

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[When Helping Is Risky: The Behavioral and Neurobiological Trade-off of Social and Risk Preferences](#)

Jörg Gross et al.



This research identifies two broad factors that appear to influence individuals' willingness to help others when doing so presents a risk for themselves (e.g., taking losses to help someone): social preferences, such as valuation of others' well-being, and risk preferences, such as the personal risk one finds acceptable. In addition, increased dopamine levels in participants' brains (via the administration of methylphenidate) increased their risky helping behavior relative to a control condition because of changes to personal risk preferences but not to social preferences. However, increased norepinephrine levels (via the administration of atomoxetine) did not change their risky helping behavior.

[Do Monkeys and Young Children Understand Exclusive “Or” Relations? A Commentary on Ferrigno et al. \(2021\)](#)

Shalini Gautam, Thomas Suddendorf, and Jonathan Redshaw

Ferrigno and colleagues (2021) found that monkeys could use disjunctive syllogisms (i.e., given A or B, if not A, then B) to gain their favored food 75% of the time. Gautam and colleagues argue that the original data did not show that the monkey understood the exclusive “or” relations in the task; instead, they write, monkeys inferred that B was true when A was false but failed to infer that B was false when A was true. Gautam and colleagues found the same response pattern in young children, arguing that they appeared able to make both inferences (showing understanding of exclusive “or” relations) only at 5 years of age.

[Minding Your Own Business? Mindfulness Decreases Prosocial Behavior for People With Independent Self-Construals](#)

Michael J. Poulin, Lauren M. Ministero, Shira Gabriel, C. Dale Morrison, and Esha Naidu



Mindfulness appears to decrease prosocial behavior for individuals who see themselves as more independent. Poulin and colleagues found that, compared with a control task, a mindfulness intervention (i.e., with instructions to breathe and focus on the present moment) led to decreased prosocial behavior among participants with independent views of themselves, measured by how many envelopes they stuffed with letters requesting help for a regional charity. Participants who viewed themselves as more interdependent showed increased prosocial behavior. This pattern of results also appeared when participants were primed to focus on independence or interdependence.

[Little Between-Region and Between-Country Variance When People Form Impressions of Others](#)

Neil Hester, Sally Y. Xie, and Eric Hehman



Forming first impressions about other people's personalities does not vary much across cultures, this research indicates. Participants from 45 countries rated 120 faces on 13 traits (e.g., trustworthy, happy, attractive). Key factors behind variances in their ratings were the perceivers' idiosyncrasies (29%) and those idiosyncrasies in conjunction with the faces' characteristics (16%), but not country or region differences. Hester and colleagues also replicated this pattern of results by having participants from 41 countries rate 100 faces on 8 traits.

[The Effects of Retirement on Sense of Purpose in Life: Crisis or Opportunity?](#)

Ayşe Yemiscigil, Nattavudh Powdthavee, and Ashley V. Whillans



This research suggests that retirement might increase one's sense of purpose in life. Yemiscigil and colleagues used quasiexperimental methods to analyze the effects of retirement on individuals who transitioned from work to retirement. Results from longitudinal questionnaires indicated that retirement led people to feel more meaningful engagement with goals and daily activities, indicating productive involvement with life and existential concerns (i.e., more sense of purpose in life). This increase appeared to be driven by retirement among individuals with lower socioeconomic status who had been dissatisfied with their work. These findings indicate that policies that delay retirement may have adverse psychological impacts, especially on disadvantaged populations.

[The Self in the Mind's Eye: Revealing How We Truly See Ourselves Through Reverse Correlation](#)

Lara Maister, Sophie De Beukelaer, Matthew R. Longo, and Manos Tsakiris



Maister and colleagues examined how people see themselves physically, which can impact their mental health. Participants looked at pairs of images and chose the ones that looked more like themselves. Then the researchers averaged all of the "self" images into a final image. These self-portraits were similar to participants' real faces, especially when people had high social self-esteem, and contained personality cues (self-rated by the participants) that external observers were able to infer. Body self-portraits were much different from participants' real bodies, and participants with negative attitudes toward their bodies produced less accurate self-portraits than participants with positive attitudes.

[Reward Rapidly Enhances Visual Perception](#)

Phillip (Xin) Cheng, Anina N. Rich, and Mike E. Le Pelley



This research suggests that brief, not-consciously processed information about rewards may influence visual perception. Participants identified the direction in which a test stimulus was rotated (in comparison with a cue stimulus) more accurately when the cue's spatial frequency (i.e., which determined the image's level of detail) signaled a high monetary reward than when it signaled a low monetary reward. This effect occurred only when the reward information was presented briefly, without participants' being aware of it. Also, reward information affected accuracy only when it was presented at the encoding stage. At the test stage, regardless of how long reward information was presented, accuracy was unaffected.

[Predictors of Listening-Related Fatigue Across the Adult Life Span](#)

Ronan McGarrigle, Sarah Knight, Benjamin W. Y. Hornsby, and Sven Mattys



Sustained and effortful listening may cause fatigue, especially in older adults, potentially leading to social withdrawal and reduced well-being—but not always, this research suggests. McGarrigle and colleagues examined the factors that can influence how listening-related fatigue changes with age. They asked 281 adults between the ages of 18 and 85 years to complete a listening task, a fatigue scale, a memory questionnaire, and other individual-differences measurements. Results indicated that older adults with greater perceived hearing impairment tended to report more listening-related fatigue than those without hearing impairment, but aging was otherwise associated with less fatigue, possibly via older adults' reduced susceptibility to mood disturbance and decreased sensory-processing sensitivity.

[Shared Time Scarcity and the Pursuit of Extraordinary Experiences](#)

Ximena Garcia-Rada, and Tami Kim



When individuals perceive their time with a partner as scarce, they appear to prefer sharing unique and superior experiences, this research suggests. On a social media platform, participants were more likely to click on an ad campaign for the “Top Five Extraordinary Experiences in Boston” when the campaign evoked shared time scarcity (e.g., “summer is so short”) compared with when it did not (e.g., “summer just began”). A follow-up experiment indicated that individuals choose extraordinary experiences to sustain their relationships' well-being. And, as two other experiments indicated, individuals prioritize extraordinariness over quantity and convenience.