

# New Research in *Psychological Science*

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## [Do People Prescribe Optimism, Overoptimism, or Neither?](#)

*Jane E. Miller, Inkyung Park, Andrew R. Smith, and Paul D. Windschitl*



People generally recommend that others feel optimistic about desirable events but not overestimate the likelihood of those events. Participants read scenarios about protagonists facing uncertain events with a desired outcome (e.g., winning an award) and indicated whether the protagonist should be optimistic or pessimistic about the event and how likely the protagonist should expect the positive outcome to be. Participants endorsed optimism but did not recommend overestimating the likelihood of desirable outcomes. These results suggest that how people are asked about optimism affects their response and that they do not tend to endorse biased optimism.

## [Mental Logout: Behavioral and Neural Correlates of Regulating Temptations to Use Social Media](#)

*Nurit Sternberg, Roy Luria, and Gal Sheppes*



How can one control and regulate the temptation to use social media instead of doing other things, such as sleeping or focusing on driving? While researchers collected electroencephalographic (EEG) data, participants viewed social-media-related images (e.g., Facebook icons). Participants reported less desire to use social media when they were instructed to direct their attention to neutral thoughts (e.g., think about geometric shapes) than when they were instructed to allow their thoughts and intentions to use social media to flow freely. EEG data indicated that when participants attended to neutral thoughts, they gave less initial attention to social-media images and represented them less often in working memory.

## [Acute Psychosocial Stress Increases Cognitive-Effort Avoidance](#)

*Mario Bogdanov, Jonas P. Nitschke, Sophia LoParco, Jennifer A. Bartz, and A. Ross Otto*



Bogdanov and colleagues examined participants under stress and in a control condition and tested their preference for less demanding tasks. In the stress condition, researchers manipulated psychosocial stress using the Trier Social Stress Test, in which participants give a speech and perform a difficult arithmetic task in front of judges; in the control condition, participants gave a speech about a self-chosen topic and performed a simple arithmetic task. Results indicated that acute stress increased participants' preference for less demanding behaviors in a task in which they had to make numerical judgments, suggesting that stress increases avoidance of cognitive effort.

### [Pupil-Linked Arousal Biases Evidence Accumulation Toward Desirable Percepts During Perceptual Decision-Making](#)

*Yuan Chang Leong, Roma Dziembaj, and Mark D'Esposito*



People might indeed be biased to see what they want to see, this research suggests. Participants saw ambiguous images, each of which mixed a face and a scene in a different proportion, and earned \$0.05 for each correct categorization (e.g., face-dominant or scene-dominant). However, in some cases, the researchers motivated participants to see more faces or scenes by telling them they would receive \$3.00 for each block in which either kind of stimulus was dominant. Participants were more likely to report seeing the category they had the incentive to see. Moreover, when participants showed higher levels of arousal, measured by pupil dilatation, their motivationally biased responses increased.

### [A Multisite Preregistered Paradigmatic Test of the Ego-Depletion Effect](#)

*Kathleen D. Vohs et al.*



The ego-depletion effect occurs when self-control for a task is exhausted after being used in a previous task. Vohs and members of 36 labs assessed the size and robustness of ego-depletion effects using a novel replication method—the paradigmatic replication approach. In this methodology, replication procedures are selected on the basis of how well they represent the phenomenon rather than by drawing from the published studies that showed the effect. Overall, preregistered confirmatory analyses did not indicate evidence of the ego-depletion effect. However, exploratory analyses found a statistically significant (albeit small) effect ( $d = 0.08$ ); this effect was larger for participants who reported more fatigue. Still, Bayesian analyses indicated that the data were as likely under the null hypothesis as under the alternative.

### [The Effect of Replications on Citation Patterns: Evidence From a Large-Scale Reproducibility Project](#)

*Felix Schafmeister*



Schafmeister tested whether the publication of independent replication studies affects the citation patterns of the original studies. Looking at citation patterns before and after the publication of 95 replications conducted under the Reproducibility Project: Psychology, Schafmeister found no changes in citation rates around the time the replications were published. These results indicate that there might be a lack of attention to how replication results are communicated, which could slow down the scientific process's self-corrective ability.

### [Boosting Understanding and Identification of Scientific Consensus Can Help to Correct False Beliefs](#)

*Aart van Stekelenburg, Gabi Schaap, Harm Veling, and Moniek Buijzen*



Using a communication strategy that increases people's understanding of and ability to identify scientific consensus might lead them to correct their false beliefs. Participants who held false beliefs were exposed to either a control activity or a boosting intervention designed to empower them to understand and identify scientific consensus. Afterward, they read a news article about a scientific consensus opposing their beliefs. Compared with the control group, participants exposed to the boosting intervention were more likely to correct their false beliefs.

### [Who Are You? The Study of Personality in Patients With Anterograde Amnesia](#)

*McKenna M. Garland, Jatin G. Vaidya, Daniel Tranel, David Watson, and Justin S. Feinstein*

Garland and colleagues asked seven patients with a rare and severe type of anterograde amnesia (impaired memory of the events occurring after an injury) to rate their personality traits over the course of a year. The patients' caregivers also rated the patients' personalities. Participants reported stable personality ratings across the year, but their ratings matched those of the caregivers only for their personalities before the brain injury. These findings suggest that the patients' inability to form new declarative memories did not affect the stability of their sense of self but did interfere with their ability to update it.