

New Research in *Psychological Science*

September 09, 2022



[The Relational Wear and Tear of Everyday Racism Among African American Couples](#)

Anthony D. Ong, Betul Urganci, Anthony L. Burrow, and Tracy DeHart



Ong and colleagues investigated the implications of everyday racism for relationship quality in an adult sample of 98 heterosexual African American couples. Participants reported on their experiences of racial discrimination and positive and negative affect for 21 consecutive evenings. Using dyadic analyses, the researchers found that independently of age, gender, marital status, income, racial-discrimination frequency, neuroticism, and mean levels of affect, participants' relationship quality was inversely associated with their partner's negative affective reactivity to racial discrimination. These effects were similar for men and women. These findings advance the understanding of the social effects of everyday racism.

[Racism, Relationship Quality, and Health: Further Reflections on Ong et al. \(2022\)](#)

Enrique W. Neblett, Jr.

This Further Reflections piece provides additional consideration of some of the issues under study in Ong and colleagues' article. Neblett considers (a) possible mechanisms by which daily discrimination impacts stress and relationship quality, (b) how daily-discrimination stress might relate to health disparities, and (c) implications for future research, including the possible mediating role of positive and negative behaviors on the connection between discrimination and relationship quality. With this analysis, the author hopes to plant seeds that might expand discourse on conceptual models of racism and health, as well as on the multipronged impact of racism on health.

[Specific Effects of Characteristics of Enriched Environment on Innovative Problem Solving by Animals](#)

Sha-Te Cheng, Sha Liu, Bo Ou-Yang, Xin-Yu Dai, and Liang Cheng

Cheng and colleagues investigated the effects of environmental novelty (novel vs. familiar) and environmental complexity (complex vs. normal) on innovative problem solving and its neural mechanisms in groups of mice. Compared to other mice, the mice exposed to novel but not complex environments performed better at innovative problem-solving tasks and showed more dopaminergic activity in areas of the brain that regulate motivation and cognitive flexibility. These findings indicate that an enriched environment has the potential to promote the innovative capability of mice by enhancing their novel exploratory motivation, which depends on the novelty of the environment but not its complexity.

[Psychological Well-Being in Childhood and Cardiometabolic Risk in Middle Adulthood: Findings From the 1958 British Birth Cohort](#)

Julia K. Boehm, Farah Qureshi, and Laura D. Kubzansky

Childhood psychological well-being (feelings of life satisfaction, purpose, and optimism) may promote adulthood cardiometabolic health. Boehm and colleagues used longitudinal data from 4,007 English participants who, at age 11, had written essays about their future. Two judges rated each essay for nine psychological well-being items, and when participants reached age 45, nurses assessed their blood pressure, heart rate, lipids, glycosylated hemoglobin, fibrinogen, and C-reactive protein, which were standardized and summed for total cardiometabolic risk. Analyses indicated that children with greater psychological well-being had lower cardiometabolic risk in adulthood, specifically, healthier total cholesterol and triglycerides.

[Cultures Crossing: The Power of Habit in Delaying Gratification](#)

Kaichi Yanaoka et al.



This research suggests that culturally specific habits might explain why individuals delay gratification—resist immediate temptations in favor of larger later rewards—and why this behavior might predict life success. Yanaoka and colleagues found that children in Japan delayed gratification longer for food than for gifts, whereas children in the United States delayed longer for gifts than for food. This interaction may reflect cultural differences: Waiting to eat is emphasized more in Japan than in the United States, whereas waiting to open gifts is emphasized more in the United States than in Japan.

[I Hear My Voice; Therefore I Spoke: The Sense of Agency Over Speech Is Enhanced by Hearing One's Own Voice](#)

Ryu Ohata, Tomohisa Asai, Shu Imaizumi, and Hiroshi Imamizu



Ohata and colleagues found that sense of agency over speech—the subjective experience of “causing a voice”—is enhanced by hearing one’s own voice. They manipulated self-voice identity by distorting the pitch of a feedback voice and examined implicit (intentional binding) and explicit (agency judgment)

measures of the speakers' sense of agency. When participants heard their undistorted voices, they perceived a shorter interval between action and outcome (i.e., intentional binding) than when they heard their pitch-distorted voices. In the presence of sensorimotor inconsistency (action–outcome mismatch), participants judged their agency over speech more consistently than their agency over hand/limb movement.

[Too Reluctant to Reach Out: Receiving Social Support Is More Positive Than Expressers Expect](#)

James A. Dungan, David M. Munguia Gomez, and Nicholas Epley



This research suggests that people's expectations about how their support will be received predict their likelihood of expressing it, but they systematically underestimate how positively recipients will respond. Participants expressed support to other people they knew or to strangers facing difficulties, via message or in person. One study suggested that expressers may focus on how competent their support seems, whereas recipients may focus on the warmth it conveys. These findings suggest that miscalibrated concerns about expressing support competently may make people overly reluctant to reach out to someone in need.

[Shame Broadcasts Social Norms: The Positive Social Effects of Shame on Norm Acquisition and Normative Behavior](#)

Rebecca L. Schaumberg and Samuel E. Skowronek



Shame might facilitate social cohesion by fostering norm transmission. Schaumberg and Skowronek investigated how one person's expression of shame affects witnesses to that behavior. Across seven studies with U.S.-based participants, they manipulated whether someone in a photo or video conveyed shame, no specific emotion, or other discrete emotions regarding their behavior. They then assessed how witnesses to this behavior inferred norms and changed their behavior in order to conform. Results indicated that participants relied on those conveying shame, more so than other emotions, to infer how they should or should not behave in a social context. Thus, shame broadcasted strong signals about social norms, and participants adjusted their behavior to align with these norms.

[Changes in the Prevalence of Thin Bodies Bias Young Women's Judgments About Body Size](#)

Sean Devine, Nathalie Germain, Stefan Ehrlich, and Ben Eppinger



This research suggests that women's judgments about other women's bodies are biased by an overrepresentation of thinness. In 16 blocks of 50 trials each, Devine and colleagues asked young women to repeatedly judge whether computer-generated images of female bodies were overweight. When thin bodies were overrepresented (i.e., the percentage of thin bodies increased gradually over the 16 blocks from 50% to 94%), women's conceptualization of thinness shifted, such that they were more

likely to judge bodies they had previously considered “normal” as overweight. These findings support the need for policies designed to increase size-inclusive representation in the media.

[Feeling Appreciated Buffers Against the Negative Effects of Unequal Division of Household Labor on Relationship Satisfaction](#)

Amie M. Gordon et al.



Feeling appreciated rather than taken for granted may buffer against the relationship distress that tends to result from unequal and unfair division of household labor. Gordon and colleagues tested individuals cohabiting with a romantic partner during the COVID-19 pandemic and found that people who reported doing more of the household labor and who perceived the division as more unfair were less satisfied in the initial months of the pandemic. However, these negative effects had disappeared within a year when people felt appreciated by their partners. These findings generalized across gender, employment status, age, socioeconomic status, and relationship length.