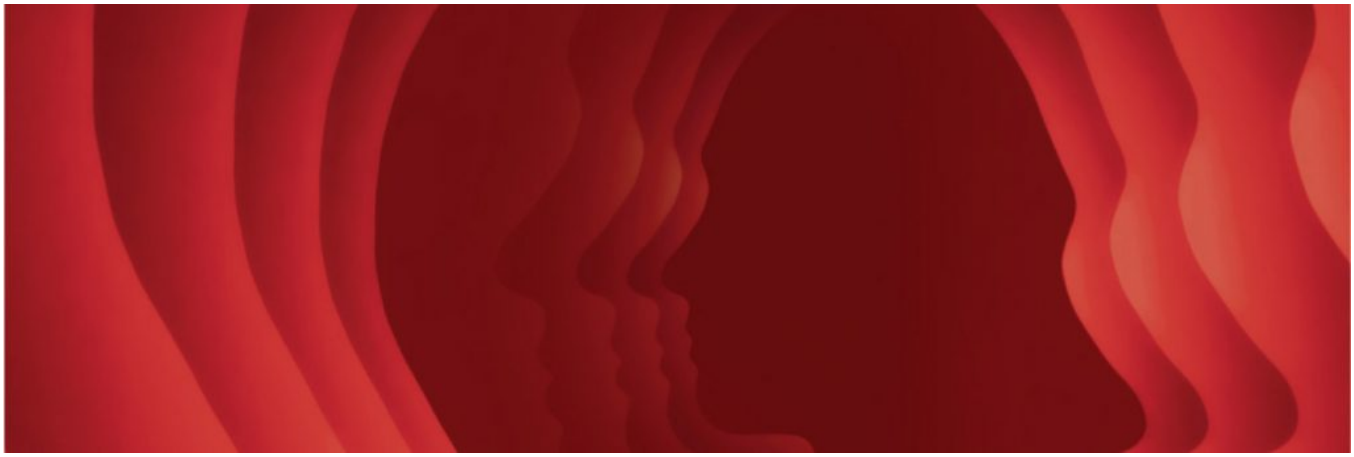
New Research in *Psychological Science*

October 22, 2020



[Behavioral Immune Trade-Offs: Interpersonal Value Relaxes Social Pathogen Avoidance]
Joshua M. Tybur, Debra Lieberman, Lei Fan, Tom R. Kupfer, and Reinout E. de Vries

People may engage in infection-prone acts with people they value, such as friends and likable strangers. Three studies indicate that individuals are more comfortable with acts that can expose them to infection (e.g., touching a handkerchief someone used to blow their nose) when interacting with someone they know and like or someone they don't know but perceive as honest and agreeable than with someone they know and dislike or a stranger they perceive as dishonest or disagreeable. These findings suggest that individuals are more comfortable with exposure to pathogens from people they value, potentially leading to behavior that can help to spread infections.

[Enhancing the Wisdom of the Crowd With Cognitive-Process Diversity: The Benefits of Aggregating Intuitive and Analytical Judgments]
Steffen Keck and Wenjie Tang

Keck and Tang suggest that aggregating intuitive and analytical individual judgments provides the most accurate aggregate estimates (i.e., enhances the wisdom of the crowd). Participants estimated the dates of different historical events and outcomes of soccer games, as well as the weights of individuals on the basis of photos, relying on their intuition or on careful thought about the reasons for their judgment. An aggregation of the intuitive and analytical judgments provided a more accurate aggregate judgment than either intuitive or analytical judgments alone, especially when the number of individual judgments was higher (i.e., larger crowd size).

[Spontaneous Distractor Reactivation With Age: Evidence for Bound Target-Distractor Representations in Memory]
Tarek Amer, K. W. Joan Ngo, Jennifer C. Weeks, and Lynn Hasher

Amer and colleagues found that, for older adults, re-presenting a drawing previously paired with an irrelevant word spontaneously reactivated the word, which influenced an implicit memory task. This suggests that older adults were more likely than younger adults to simultaneously encode both relevant and irrelevant information as an interconnected memory representation. These “cluttered” memory representations resulted in the spontaneous reactivation of the irrelevant information when they saw relevant information, which is consistent with the idea that older adults have reduced attention control and possibly less command over the content of their memories.

[The Emotional Path to Action: Empathy Promotes Physical Distancing and Wearing of Face Masks During the COVID-19 Pandemic]
Stefan Pfattheicher, Laila Nockur, Robert Böhm, Claudia Sassenrath, and Michael Bang Petersen

Empathy for people most vulnerable to COVID-19 appears to motivate wearing face masks and practicing social distancing. Participants who showed more empathy for the most vulnerable to the virus were more likely to report social-distancing practices. In two experiments, inducing empathy (by showing a video of a 91-year-old reporting he had to stop visiting his sick wife because of the virus) resulted in higher motivation to wear face masks and to practice social distancing than simply informing participants about the importance of these practices, in particular for those most vulnerable to the virus.

[Reminders of Everyday Misinformation Statements Can Enhance Memory for and Beliefs in Corrections of Those Statements in the Short Term]
Christopher N. Wahlheim, Timothy R. Alexander, and Carson D. Peske

Reminding people of fake-news misinformation before correcting it can improve memory of and belief in facts. Subjects read true and false statements taken from news sites, followed by statements that corrected the misinformation. When a reinstatement of the false statement preceded the correction (i.e., misinformation reminder), subjects had better fact recall and belief accuracy (i.e., higher ratings of believing a statement was true when it was indeed true and lower ratings when it was false). The benefits of misinformation reminders were the largest when subjects recalled the misinformation and remembered a correction had occurred.

[Children’s Cognitive Reflection Predicts Conceptual Understanding in Science and Mathematics]
Andrew G. Young and Andrew Shtulman

Cognitive reflection refers to a person’s tendency to engage in reflection to achieve a correct response to a problem instead of giving an intuitive yet wrong response. Young and Shtulman found that cognitive reflection in children predicts conceptual knowledge in biology and mathematics. Children between the ages of 5 and 12 years completed measures of cognitive reflection, rational thinking, and executive functioning, along with biology and mathematics tests. After adjusting for age, rational thinking, and executive functioning, children with higher cognitive reflection scores showed a better understanding of biology and mathematics concepts.

[When Not Choosing Leads to Not Liking: Choice-Induced Preference in Infancy]
Alex M. Silver, Aimee E. Stahl, Rita Loiotile, Alexis S. Smith, and Lisa Feigenson

It is well known that not choosing something usually leads to disliking it. Silver and colleagues showed that this effect also occurs in infants before they acquire experience making decisions. Infants between 10 and 20 months old chose between two toys. Subsequently, when asked to choose between the unchosen toy and an equally attractive toy, they avoided the unchosen one. This avoidance disappeared when infants were given one of the toys rather than choosing it and when they made their choice without seeing the toys. Hence, this choice-induced preference appears to reflect genuine preference and not attraction to a novel option.