

Undeserved Compliments May Harm Kids' Self-Esteem

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LiveScience:

Giving yourself undeserved pats on the back may lead to psychological distress, a new study shows.

The overly positive, yet distorted, view of one's achievements could keep someone from experiencing dejection, the researchers say.

But the price may be more anxiety over whether others will find out. In addition, if a person thinks they are doing such a bang-up job, there's no room for improvement.

Young-Hoon Kim of the University of Pennsylvania and Chi-Yue Chiu of Nanyang Technological University in Singapore conducted four studies that included 295 U.S. college undergraduates with an average age of 19 and 2,780 Hong Kong students from grades 7 to 12. The participants were separated into four groups, with three U.S. groups and one Hong Kong group.

In the first two experiments, the Hong Kong group and one of the U.S. groups completed academic tests. They then rated how well they thought they did and compared their own performances with that of other students at their schools. After their assessments, the participants answered a questionnaire that is widely used to measure symptoms of depression.

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