Peer and Personal Norms in Relation to Teen Relationship Violence

Jessica Belfy, Elesse Akre, Audrey Hokoda, & Emilio Ulloa

San Diego State University

Teen dating violence is a prevalent problem with 40% of adolescents reporting that they have used some form of violence against their dating partner (Coker, Smith, McKeown, & King, 2001). Teen dating violence consists of a continuum of abuse. (Hickman, Jaycox, & Aronoff, 2004). Increasingly research has examined correlates of teen dating violence. For example, Personal norms, which includes acceptance of violence beliefs are an important factors contributing to the perpetration of dating violence (Malik, Sorenson, & Aneshensel, 1997). Furthermore, during the teen years, peers are a powerful source of influence (Harris, 1995), and studies have reported that peer norms predict teen dating violence (Arriaga & Foshee 2004). Despite gender differences in Teen Relationship violence (TRV) few studies have examined whether correlates of TRV differ for females and males. In addition, the majority of research on TRV has been done on white, middle class Americans. Therefore this study examines gender differences in acceptance of violence beliefs and peer norms for TRV among Mexican versus Mexican-American adolescents.
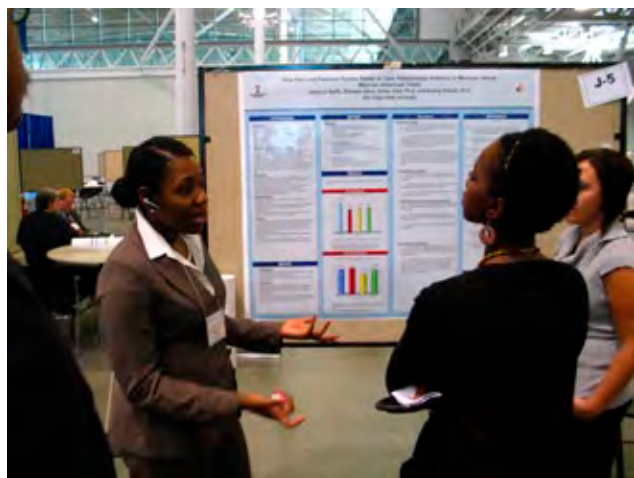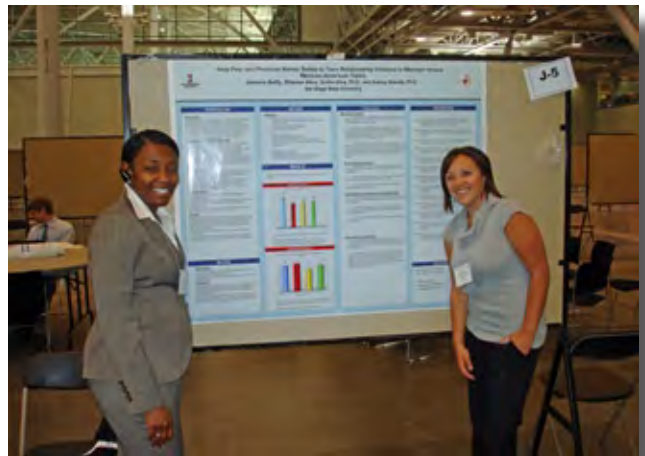
Surveys were given to 197 Mexican and 97 Mexican-American students (ages 14-17). Two 2 by 2 analyses of variance (ANOVA) were run. The results revealed a significant gender by location interaction for peer norms for TRV perpetration (p < .01). Post-hoc t-tests revealed that Mexican-American girls reported higher rates of peer perpetration than Mexican girls (p < .05). In addition Mexican-American girls reported higher rates of peer perpetration than Mexican-American boys (p < .05). Furthermore there were significant main effects for gender and location, with boys having higher acceptance of violence scores than girls and Mexican American adolescents having higher acceptance of violence scores than Mexican adolescents. Implications for interventions and future research are discussed.

Assessing the Reliability of Frederick's (2005) Cognitive Reflection Test

Susanna Berry & Ian Wells

University of East London School of Psychology
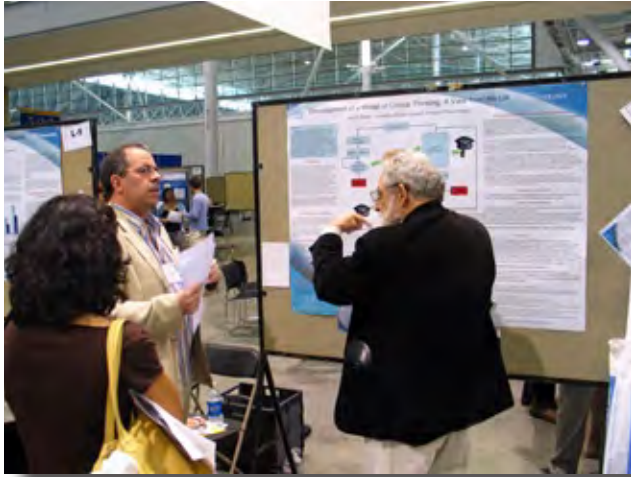
Frederick (2005) introduced a simple three-item *Cognitive Reflection Test (CRT)* which he suggests measures 'the ability or disposition to resist reporting the response that first comes to mind' p.35. Thus, for one item from the CRT 'A bat and ball cost $1.10 in total. The bat costs $1 more than the ball. How much does the ball cost ?' the first, intuitive but incorrect response is 10c (The correct response being 5c). Daniel Kahneman has used items from the CRT to illustrate dual-process models of reasoning, suggesting that successful responses are indicative of System '2' processing.

In a large study using the *CRT* (n=3428) Frederick reported significant relationships with both time and risk perception, and has gone on to suggest that the *CRT* is as predictive as other intelligence tests taking several hours to administer. In addition Frederick reported a significant sex difference in performance, with males outperforming females, but offers little explanation of this finding. The study reported here was intended to examine the reliability of the measure and to further investigate the anomalous sex difference.

447 participants from three distinct populations completed the *CRT* (1st year undergraduate students, UK Civil servant from clerical grades and 'high-flying' UK Civil servants).

The study replicated Frederick's original findings, with the sex difference appearing in all three populations employed.

The sex difference in *CRT* found across the three populations tested here suggests that the difference reported by Frederick cannot be dismissed as an artefact of the population he tested, and must be seen as a genuine difference in performance. The establishment of a sex difference is such a basic cognitive ability is of broad interest and calls for further investigation.
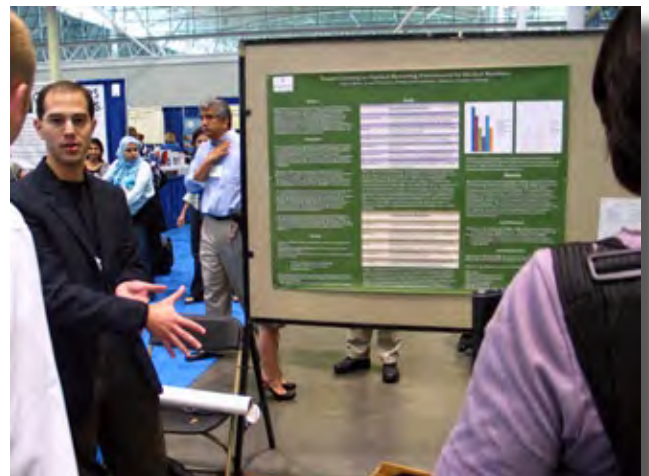
Reference

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Toward Creating an Optimal Mentoring Environment

Orin C. Davis, Jeanne Nakamura, Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi

Quality of Life Research Center, Claremont Graduate University

By distilling a set of consistencies from a review of the literature relating to mentoring in residency, a framework was generated that serves as a model for the optimal mentoring environment for residency. In this review, it was found that optimal mentoring environments emerge from relationships that are rooted in six interactional foundations: a) emotional safety, b) support c) protégé-centeredness, d) informality, e) responsiveness (feedback), and f) mutual respect, and which enable protégés to engage in five developmental behaviors : a) synthesis, b) reflection, c) praxis , d) extrapolation, and e) exercising autonomy.

Cradling Differences in Response to Infant Emotional Expression and Hemispheric Activation

Emily R. R. Burdett, & Daniel W. Kee,

Department of Psychology, California State University, Fullerton

Research has demonstrated a leftward cradling preference when holding infants. Several explanations have focused on the asymmetrical relationship of leftward cradling and the selective activation of the right hemisphere for emotional processing. Early studies evaluated cradling in a "standard" condition and did not consider the emotionality of the infant. In the present study a within subjects comparison of three conditions is offered: Neutral (i.e., standard), fear, vs. happy. We also evaluated right-hemisphere processing with a free-vision chimeric face test, developed by Workman, Peters, and Taylor (2000), measuring six separate emotions (Happy, sad, angry, surprise, disgust, and fear) in contrast to the single emotion of "happy" studied previously. Participants included 56 mothers. Participants were presented with 48 pairs of emotional chimeric faces and instructed to choose the face that looked the most emotional. Participants were also asked to cradle a baby doll while imagining their own child expressing three different emotions: Neutral, fear, and happy. Cradling behavior was recorded as left, right, or middle. The neutral condition was presented first, followed by fear and happy in a counterbalanced order. Results, using a Non-Linear Mixed Model, showed that the leftward cradling bias changes when the infant's emotion is considered. Specifically, during the happy condition, the majority of mothers were more likely to cradle to the middle, while in the fearful and neutral conditions, the majority of women were more likely to cradle to the left. Greater right hemisphere arousal was also observed, however, this bias was not associated with cradling preference. The present results reveal that cradling preference is affected by the imagined emotional state of the infant. Thus, because of shifts in cradling due to imagined infant emotions, emotionality of the infant is an important variable to include when studying infant cradling preferences.

What are Public Views on Using Video to Deter Crime and Consumer Fraud? *

Ada Chan, St., John's University Law School

Shani Rumaldo, Fordham University

Robert Emmons, Nassau County NY Court System

Since 1978, Nassau County NY has pioneered the use of "video stings" to protect the public from a wide variety of dishonest behaviors—with appliance repair, auto repair, home contractors, insurance sales, chiropractors, and even internet pedophiles (Lambert, 1997). Surprisingly, though this has been a model for a few other municipalities, neither Nassau County nor others have conducted systematic research on how the public regards this unusual policy (Greene, Heilbrun, Fortune, Nietzel 2007). In this survey, 114 people completed an anonymous structured 18-item survey containing 3 scales: their familiarity with this policy through the media (0-14), their support of this practice (0-28), their authoritarian personality (0-20). As hypothesized: (a) there was immense variation in public support, from 0 to 28 on the 0-28 scale. (b) The average sentiment was a strong support for video stings (mean = 22.38). (c) There were clear biodata correlates of increased support, including: belief that video evidence leads to a drop in crime ($r= +.312, p < .01$), more authoritarian outlook ($r= + .264, p < .01$), but not county residence ($r= .022$, n.s.). The policy implications of these findings are discussed.

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*Address inquiries to Ada Chan at achan@fordham.edu.

Age Appropriateness For Different Parenting Discipline Strategies

Debby L. Cochrane, Scarlet Smith & M. Alexis Kennedy

University Of Nevada, Las Vegas

Physical discipline is still a common practice in the United States with representative samples reporting that 94% of American parents hit their young children (Straus, 2000). Previous research has revealed that rates of physical discipline vary across the age groups (Wissow, 2001). In North America, younger children are spanked at a higher rate (Larzelere, 2000).

The purpose of this research is to compare attitudes toward physical discipline of children of different ages. Traditional research on has often ignored the age of the child being disciplined. When measuring attitudes of the appropriateness of this discipline strategy, the age of the child being hit may lead to different levels of support.

Acceptance of physical discipline and other disciplines strategies were also compared between male and female participants the study revealed no significant differences by the child's age (Collett, 2001). In gender comparisons 44% of females and 31% of males participants revealed they spank their children. Spanking decreases after the age of 6, boys are spanked more often than girls, and fathers are less likely to spank a child of any age than mothers (Day, 1998).

Five % of participants considered it appropriate to spank a child under the age of 1. Less than 2% considered it appropriate to hit a child with a closed fist, but 5% of male participants reported that it is appropriate to hit a child 11-14 years old with a closed fit. Male participants considered it less acceptable for children younger.

Pinching a child who has pinched another in a form of discipline revealed 20% of the participants felt it was more appropriate to pinch a child 2-5 years old and less appropriate for 6-10 years old. Male participant considered pinching was more acceptable for all ages than female participants. Hitting a child with an open hand as a form of discipline was considered more acceptable for 6-10 years old, followed by 2-5 years old and least acceptable for 11-14 year olds, both male and female participants agreed with hitting with an open hand was appropriate for younger age groups but not 11-14 year olds. Hitting with a wooden spoon, as a form of discipline was considered more acceptable for 6-10 year olds, followed by 2-5 years old and least acceptable for 11-14 years old, male participants found more appropriate to hit older children with a wooden spoon than 2-5 years old. Non-physical forms of discipline were also polled (e.g., withholding meals or taking away television viewing for a day). Participants revealed it is more acceptable to send a child 11-14 years old to bed without dinner, followed by 6-10 years old, and least acceptable for children 2-5 years old. In gender comparison both male and female participants found it more acceptable to send children 11-14 years old to bed without dinner, female participants found it less acceptable than for 6-10 years old, followed by both male and female found it least acceptable for 2-5years old to go to bed without dinner. Taking away television for a day as a form of discipline participants agreed it is acceptable for all ages and both male and female participants agreed with this form of discipline.

In order to assess whether physical discipline of younger children is considered more acceptable than physical discipline of older children, items were created that specified the age of the child. The type of physical discipline used revealed different acceptance levels across different age groups. For example, slapping a naughty child or hitting with an open hand was considered the most acceptable for the 6-10 year olds, followed by 2-5 year olds and the least acceptable for 11-14 year olds. Pinching a child to show that it is not alright to pinch was considered more acceptable for 2-5 year olds than for 6-10 years. Hitting a child with a closed fist was considered more acceptable for 11-14 years old and least acceptable for 2-5 years. Hitting a child with a wooden spoon was considered more acceptable for 6 to 10 years old, followed by 11-14 years old and considered least acceptable for 2-5 year olds. Prevention programs for child discipline are parenting classes, counseling programs, and self-help books.

Brian Stagner judging

Is Punishment of Non-cooperators Essential? The Role of Altruistic Punishment

Miriam Dishon-Berkovits, Ono Academic College, Kiryat Ono, Israe

Richard Berkovits, Department of Physics, Bar-Ilan University, Ramat-Gan 52900, Israel

In human society unrelated individuals cooperate with each other; for example by conserving water. Altruistic Punishment is the punishment of noncooperators even at a personal cost to the punisher (e.g., confronting or reporting someone willfully wasting water). This is a key component in maintaining cooperation. Yet, it is seen by some as an evolutionary puzzle since it is implausible for the punisher to expect that her costs will be directly repaid.

We investigated why it is necessary to punish noncooperators, whilst admonishment is not sufficient to deter noncooperators.

We created a mathematical model where m = 1; 000; 000 packets of tokens are randomly distributed among n = 10; 000 individuals. In 80% of the cases each packet contains only one token which the receiver keeps. In 20% of the cases the packet contains 5 tokens, of which the receiver keeps only one. Activists randomly distribute the remaining 4 tokens; Noncooperators discard the 4 tokens (i.e., waste a resource that could be shared).

When another individual observes this behavior, an Activist pays one token in order to distribute the remaining 4 tokens among the population, while a Noncooperator does nothing. When Altruistic Admonishment is administrated, Noncooperators are only rebuked (without penalty), while for Altruistic Punishment their token is taken.

As is seen in the Figure, in both cases, as the percentage of Activists in society increases, the mean number of tokens distributed increases too. Yet, while following Altruistic Admonishment Noncooperators receive a larger number of tokens than Activists, following Altruistic Punishment, above a critical percentage of Activists in society the situation reverses. Thus, although the general population gains similarly from Altruistic Admonishment as from Altruistic Punishment, only in the latter case the problem of free riders is addressed.
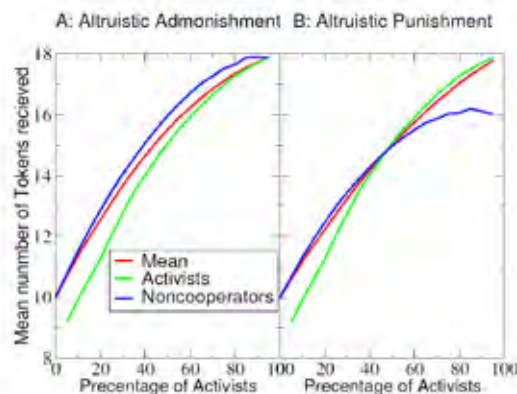

FIG. 1: Mean number of tokens earned as a function of the percentage of Activists in the society

Gender Differences in the Evaluation of Sexually Explicit Pictures

Esther Israel

University of Utah

This study identified sexually explicit pictures that heterosexual men (N =35) and women (N = 50) found most and least sexually appealing. Stimulus pictures consisted of a man (N = 40) or woman (N = 40) in the nude. Participants were asked to rate the sexual appeal of these pictures. A 2 X 2 sex of picture by gender of participant analysis of variance (ANOVA) was conducted with the sexual appeal ratings as the dependent variable. There was a main effect for sex of picture, $F(1, 70) = 25.13$, $p < .001$, with female pictures (M = 3.7, SD = 2.0) rated higher than male pictures (M = 2.8, SD 2.0). There was also a main effect for gender of participant, $F(1, 83) = 71.5$, $p < .001$, with male participants providing higher ratings (M = 3.6, SD = 2.25) than female participants (M = 3.1, SD = 1.92). There was also a significant interaction between the two independent variables. Male participants provided a significant bimodal rating pattern, $F(1, 70) = 25.13$, $p < .001$, with low sexual appeal ratings to male pictures (M = 1.7, SD = 1.22) and high sexual appeal ratings to female pictures (M = 5.0, SD = .95). It is of note that a large proportion of male participants (31%, N =11) opted not to rate the male pictures. In contrast, female participants provided moderate but significant sexual appeal ratings, $F(1, 83) = 73.64$, $p < .001$, to both male pictures (M = 3.4, SD = 1.45) and female pictures (M = 2.8, SD = 1.28). These findings are consistent with the literature supporting the idea that male sexual interest is more strongly category specific than female sexual interest.

Preschool Children's Helping Behavior: Observational Study and Mixed-method Analysis

Emily McSpadden - Fordham University and The National Center on Addiction and Substance Abuse (CASA) at Columbia University

The purpose of this observational study was to better understand the nature of helping behavior in preschool aged children, particularly toward adult caregivers versus peer playmates. Specific observable child-initiated helping behaviors were identified via a review of the existing literature on the topic, and these behaviors were observed, counted, and timed in a sample of 12 children interacting in a day care setting with both a caregiver and with other children. In order to more carefully consider the operationalization of the construct of "helping" in these children, both quantitative and qualitative data analyses are reported and discussed. In general, findings show that helping behavior did not change very dramatically during the investigated range of ages, and there was no significant sex or age difference detected. Helping behavior type and quality, as well as to whom it was directed, were relevant to apparent motivations, which could be understood in more detail with further qualitative study.
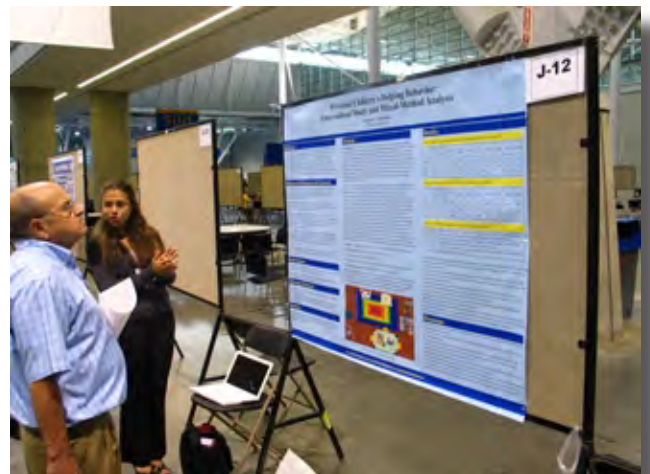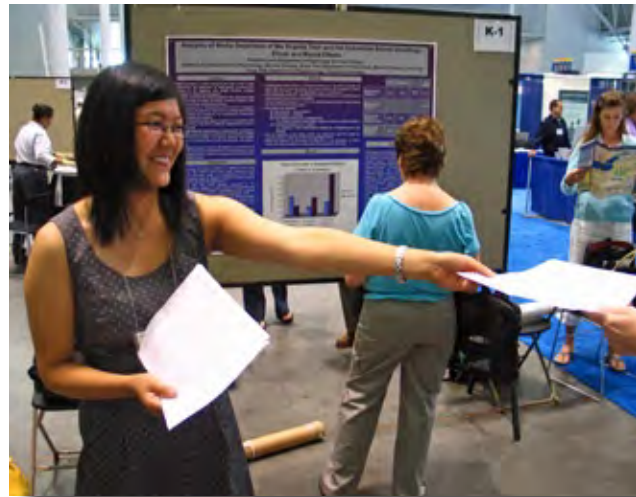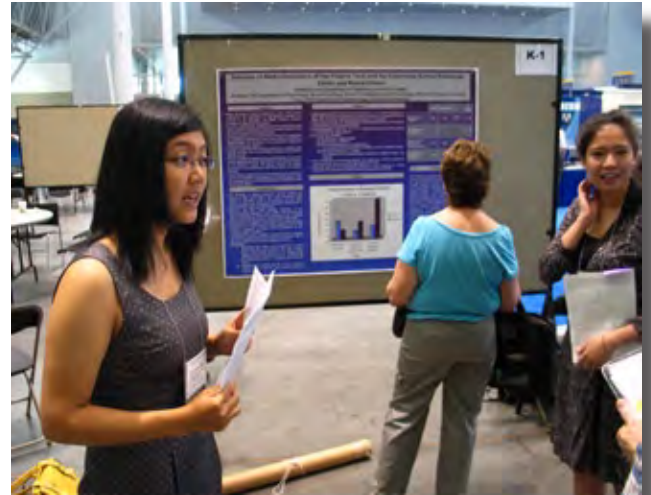
Analysis of Media Depictions of Korean American and White American School Shootings

Katherine Lam, Kathleen J. Sia, Grace Yeh, & Lawrence H. Yang

Columbia University

The tragic school shootings at Virginia Polytechnic Institute (VTech) and Columbine High School have drawn considerable public and media attention. Minorities are often either depicted negatively or are disproportionately targeted in news stories (Ramasubramanian 2007), contributing to continued marginalization and a growing perception of ethnic minorities as societal threats (Nairn 2006).

However, many of these comparisons have been made between African American and White groups (Mastro 2006). The shootings at VTech and Columbine share many event similarities (i.e., the shooters are young males who exhibit similar disturbed behavioral histories), which enable an informative study to be performed on inter-group representation by the media. In particular, the ethnicity of the VTech shooter provides a unique opportunity to examine how Asian American groups might be depicted compared to White groups in the context of an extremely violent event. To the extent that negative characteristics are disproportionately attributed to the VTech shooter, societal attitudes toward Asian American immigrants in general might be impacted by this extremely negative exemplar.

Because group members tend to attribute negative events to negative and internal causes rather than external characteristics of outgroup members (Ma & Karasawa, 2006), we hypothesize that newspaper reporters from three mainstream U.S. newpapers will make attributions to mental illness diagnosis and treatment, and negative psychosocial aspects of the VTech shooter (i.e., an outgroup Asian-American male) more frequently when compared with the Columbine shooter (i.e., an ingroup White-American male). Also, we hypothesize that neutral/positive aspects of the Columbine shooter will be mentioned more frequently than the VTech shooter.

Borderline Personality Disorder: Etiology, Assessment, and Treatment

Anne Reagan - University of Massachusetts

Borderline personality disorder is recognized by the American Psychiatric Association as an Axis II personality disorder. The foundations of this illness are complex and multiple factors contribute and play a role in its onset. Biology and familial environment combine for a multifaceted set of interrelated dynamics. Due to the complexity and wide range of traits, diagnosis and treatment are difficult and require a thorough understanding of borderline personality disorder. There is no one "standard patient" and this is attributed to the complex nature of borderline personality disorder. Recent research has provided effective treatment options.
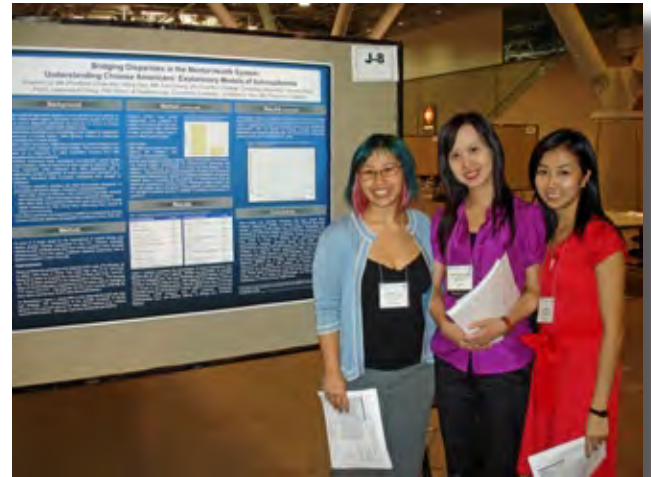
Chinese Immigrants' Explanatory Models of Schizophrenia in New York City

Graciete Lo - Fordham University

Eve Chang & Hong Ngo - Teachers College, Columbia University

In Chinese societies, relatives are often the primary caregivers of individuals with mental illness (Phillips, 1998). Relatives' perceptions of the etiology of mental illness can affect their help-seeking behaviors and adherence to mental health treatment for their loved ones (Phillips, Li, Stroup, & Xin, 2000). These complex notions about mental illness have been found to cause Chinese mentally ill individuals to undergo a longer mental health help-seeking delay than other ethnic groups (Lin, Inui, Kleinman, & Womack, 1982). Furthermore, relatives' conceptualizations of mental illness have been found to impact their emotional responses towards their loved ones, which in turn can affect future psychiatric relapses (Hooley, 1985). Given how influential Chinese relatives' explanatory models may be for patients' treatment and outcome, it is crucial to examine these causal explanations for mental illness. The present study examines explanatory models of schizophrenia among Chinese immigrants in New York City. Chinese-Americans have consistently demonstrated mental health underutilization rates at one-third of what might be expected given their population proportion, and those who eventually enter treatment systems have been diagnosed with a significantly greater proportion of severe psychiatric disorders (e.g., psychotic disorders) than European-Americans who engage in treatment (Yang & Wonpat-Borja, 2006). Given this relatively high proportion of psychotic-spectrum disorders diagnosed among Chinese-Americans, consideration of folk models of schizophrenia appear especially important to the development of culturally-competent interventions for this group. Chinese Americans are also subject to a host of socio-cultural and historical influences that may cause their explanatory models of mental illness to deviate markedly from Western biomedical models. As a result of acculturation and increased familiarity with Western medicine, relatives may endorse more causes and demonstrate a different response pattern than those who reside in China.

Method: Twenty relatives of patients with schizophrenia were recruited from the Asian-American inpatient psychiatric unit at Bellevue Hospital in New York City. Respondents were all born in China, and although many of them have been in the US for a decade or more (M=14.82, sd=5.37), 75% preferred to be interviewed in Chinese. Nearly 80% lived with their sick relatives. These participants were administered the "Causal Models Questionnaire for Schizophrenia," which was developed and validated by Phillips et al. (2000) in China and includes 45 explanations that are commonly endorsed by Chinese people. Participants were asked to: 1) list their beliefs about the causes of the patients''problem'; 2) classify the strength of possible causes (Ranging from 1= definite; 2= definite but secondary; 3= possible); and 3) choose a primary cause.

Results: Our analyses show that relatives who have lived in the U.S. for a longer period of time tend to endorse more causes for schizophrenia (r=0.75, p<0.01), suggesting that such causal models become more complex with acculturation. Also, this sample of Chinese Americans endorsed more causes on average (M=7.05, sd=2.79) than a comparable sample in China (M=2.5) (Phillips et al., 2000). When relatives were asked to pick one primary cause, the most frequently endorsed answer was related to an indigenous notion of "excessive thinking (*xiang tai duo*)." Overall, relatives endorsed more causes that emphasized social stressors (e.g., immigration), personality characteristics (e.g., not thinking openly), or biology (e.g., hereditary factors) rather than interpersonal stressors or spiritual causes (e.g., spirit possession).

Conclusion: This study offers a non-traditional approach to examine ways in which race and culture impact relatives' understandings and interpretations of mental illness. These findings suggest that immigration and subsequent exposure to Western biomedical views may contribute to more complex explanatory models of mental illness among Chinese immigrants. In devising more culturally-appropriate psychological services for this population, clinicians should firmly grasp cultural explanations of mental illness and actively utilize them in treatment. For instance, the indigenous notion of "excessive thinking" could be integrated into public outreach or psychoeducation treatment programs as means to engage and motivate this population in treatment. Making use of these important approaches promises improvements in rapport with patients and families, treatment adherence, and clinical outcome.

Ethnic Identity as Motivation for Language Acquisition

Sharon Podobnik & Martin Doppelt

University of Pittsburgh

What influences how well a person acquires a second language (L2)? The effects of language learning aptitude, attitudes, instrumental and integrative orientation on L2 performance have been well studied (Tremblay & Gardner, 1995, Masgoret & Gardner, 2003). Additionally, correlations have been found between stereotype threat and L2 acquisition (Marx & Stapel, 2006), task performance and ethnicity, task performance and domain identification, and ethnicity and ethnic identity (Montes De Vegas, 2006).

The question remains, however, to what extent social factors and a person's ethnic identity influence his or her domain identification and motivation to learn an L2 and, ultimately, his or her performance in the L2 acquisition.

This study aims to examine whether or not there exists a correlation between students' reported strength of ethnic identity, their integrative orientation, purpose for learning the L2, and other social influences such as family, peers and schooling in relation to performance in the L2 and to determine if the correlation could be attributed to an enhanced motivation to perform better and persist in L2 learning because of these particular social factors. This will be done through the use of semi-structured interview, and a packet of surveys including a Language History Questionnaire, the MEIM, and the CSE-R. Secondly, the students'

language capabilities will be assessed by reviewing various objective grades in the targeted language class as well as a standardized test used between classes.
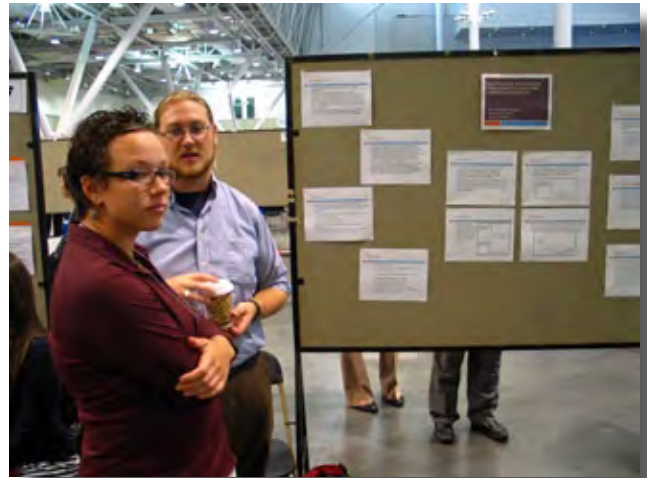
Psychological Effects of Familial Bereavement and the Family Dynamics of the Grieving Process

Matt Silva - University of Massachusetts, Amherst

The loss of a loved one can be one of the most psychologically damaging events in a person's lifetime and thus the need for effective coping behavior is essential for those suffering from such a loss. Psychodynamic, social development, and sociobiological are among the myriad of psychological perspectives that have been models proposed to understand bereavement. Psychologists are also looking for ways to integrate different cultural ideologies into an effective

treatment for the grieving process. The death of any family member can be severe, but the loss of different relations presents varying challenges. Spousal bereavement forces the widow or widower to adapt to the role of being single, both socially and economically. Child bereavement may make or break familial relations depending on the intrapsychic and interpersonal coping techniques. The effects of parental and sibling bereavement can play a serious role in the child's psychological, emotional, and physical development. Determining whether the loosening or the retaining of the connection with the deceased remains one of the core debates concerning effective coping styles. Some successful coping mechanisms include cognitive-behavioral therapy, psychoeducational intervention programs, and support groups.

Nip, Tuck, or Not? Objectification and Cosmetic Surgery

Suzanne M. Prior[a], Danielle H. Quigley[b], & Amanda Arbeau[a]

[a]St. Thomas University, Fredericton NB Canada

[b]Carleton University, Ottawa ON Canada

Each year, tens of thousands of people undergo elective cosmetic surgery. Despite the rapid upsurge in plastic surgery rates, the psychology of cosmetic surgery remains poorly understood. We sought to advance understanding in this area by examining the relationship that self- and other-objectification may have with individuals' desire and approval of specific cosmetic surgery procedures, as well as with the acceptance of cosmetic surgery in general. Ninety-seven women and 88 men completed self-objectification and other-objectification questionnaires, as well as measures in which they rated their desire and the approval of specific cosmetic surgery procedures. They also completed an acceptance of cosmetic surgery scale. For women, positive correlations were found between self-objectification and the desire for cosmetic surgery, as well as between self-objectification and the acceptance of cosmetic surgery in general. Among men, self-objectification was positively related to the desire for cosmetic surgery, approval of cosmetic surgery for other men, approval of cosmetic surgery for women, and the acceptance of cosmetic surgery in general. For women, other-objectification of the opposite sex was significantly related to the desire for cosmetic surgery, approval of cosmetic surgery for women, and acceptance of cosmetic surgery. For men, other-objectification of the same sex was positively related to the approval of cosmetic surgery for women, approval of cosmetic surgery for men, and the acceptance of cosmetic surgery in general. With the rates of cosmetic surgery rising dramatically and the physical and psychological risks associated with these procedures, it is important to better understand peoples' attitudes to these procedures and the factors that contribute to these views. We found that both self- and other-objectification are related to individuals' attitudes towards cosmetic surgery both for themselves and others. Results are discussed in terms of societal attitudes, objectified media images, and the gendered nature of objectification and cosmetic surgery.
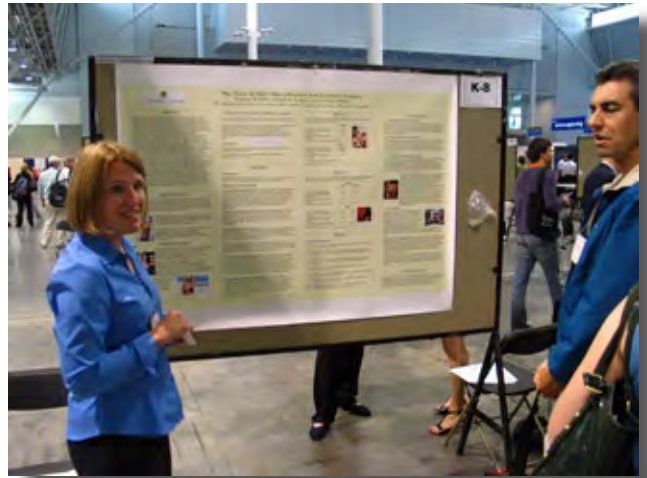
Judge MaryLou Cheal

Judges Richard Meegan & Laura Meegan
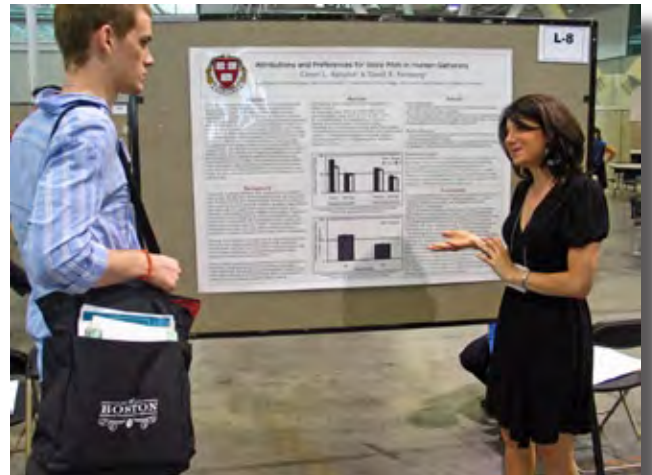
Judge Harold Takooshian


Judge Bonnie Strickland

Attributions and Preferences for Voice Pitch in Hunter—Gatherers

Coren Apicella - Harvard University

In humans, voice pitch is thought to be a cue of underlying quality and an important criterion for mate choice, but data from non-western cultures have never been provided. Here we tested attributions to and preferences for voices with raised and lowered voice pitch in hunter-gatherers. Using a forced-choice playback experiment, we found that both men and women viewed deeper voices in the opposite sex as being better at acquiring resources (e.g. hunting and gathering). While men preferred higher pitched women's voices as marriage partners, women showed no overall preference for high or low voice pitch in men. However, women who were currently breastfeeding had stronger preferences for higher-pitched men's voices whereas women not currently breastfeeding preferred lower-pitched voices. As testosterone is negatively related to voice pitch and indicative of low paternal investment, high dominance and inheritable immunity to infection, these findings potentially reflect a trade-off between choosing dominant men with good genes versus men who are good providers. Men's preferences for higher-pitched female voices are likely due to an evolved preference for markers of youth and fecundity.
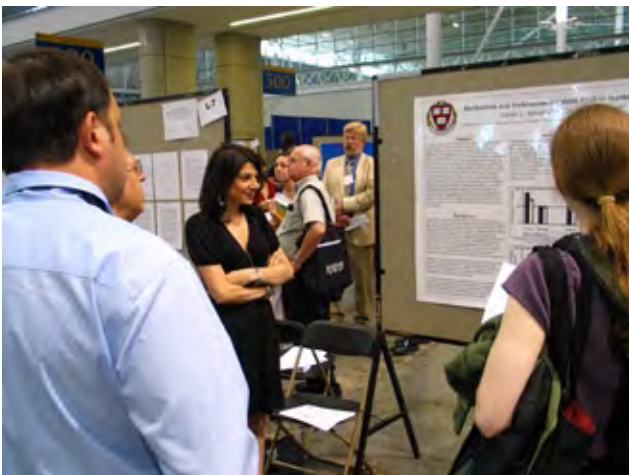
Will to Live: An Adaptive Trait Enhanced by Internal Reward From Concept Matching

Brian Bayly - Renssalayer Polytechnic Institute

Given the options of dying painlessly in the night or waking to see tomorrow, most people prefer the latter. Failing to wake is hedonically neutral; therefore the prospect of tomorrow is hedonically positive and two questions arise: what makes the prospect positive and how large an effect has this had on human evolution? Specifics: A small positive hedonic blip ensues whenever two representations in one's mind come together with a good fit or good match, e.g. representations of two rhyming words. This effect is pervasive: it rewards chatting, singing, dancing, designing, solving puzzles and recognizing things as familiar. Matching provides at least some of the appeal of tomorrow. In experiments comparing novel and seen-before stimuli, the "familiarity effect" includes gamma-range oscillations in Brodmann Area 32 (Lee et al., 2007). Separately, depressed patients with or without anhedonia symptoms differ in their BA-25 behavior, supporting the idea that the 25-32 area is crucial for enjoyment of matching experiences in normal people. Separately again, experiments comparing human and chimpanzee infants suggest that this pleasure-from-matching is significantly weaker in the latter. Synthesis: pleasure from matched representations was present, though weaker, when divergence from our common ancestor was less advanced. At such time, this pleasure would have been a brain-physiology-based variable, adaptive, with more motivated individuals having more success. It reinforced a wide enough suite of brain-based activities to boost Homo evolution in new cerebral directions.
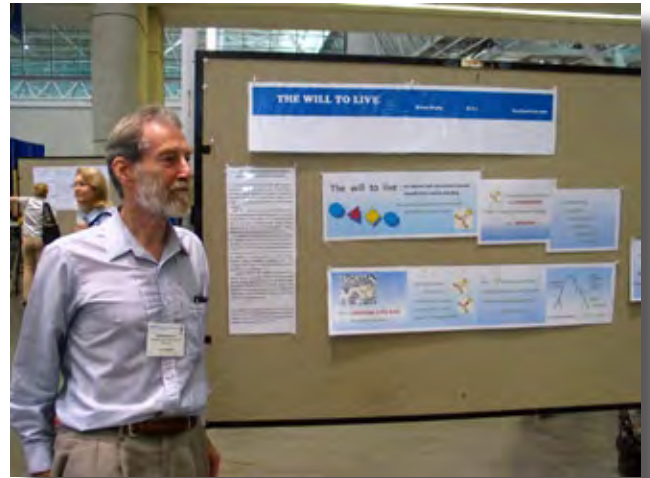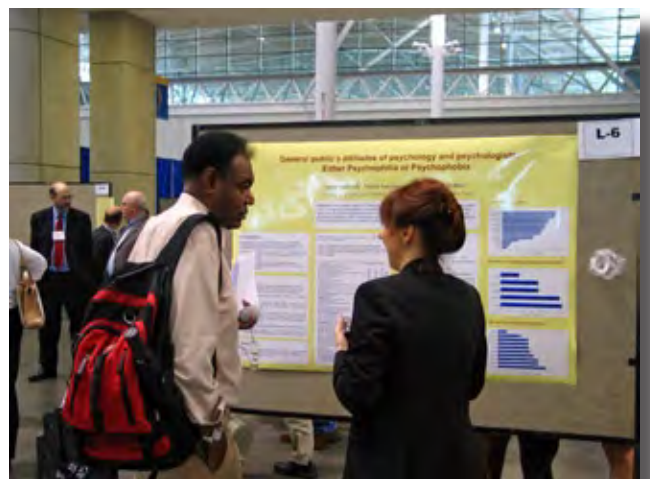
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Lauricella & Gordon poster


Petrovic, Kovacevic, & Meir poster

Curanderismo and the Influence of Curanderismo with Mexican Americans and Americans

Carolina Casillas & Laura Garza - Texas A & M University–Kingsville

For the past century curanderismo has had an impact in the medical health care system because Mexican-Americans and Mexicans that live mainly in South Texas and Mexico believe and practice curanderismo as an alternative method of healing to treat their illnesses regardless of the effectiveness of medicine. Curanderismo is known to be the art of folk healing practice by curanderos or healers to treat a wide variety of illnesses with the use of herbs, prayers, healing rituals, spiritualism, massages, amulets/charms, lotions, incenses and other healing methods. The term curanderismo comes from the Spanish verb "curar," which means "to heal" (Trotter II and Chavira, 1997). The knowledge and the skill of folk healing have been passed down through generations but the evolution of modern medicine has negatively influenced curanderismo among Mexican-Americans and Mexicans because new generations have been affected by acculturation and tend not to rely on folk healing to treat illnesses. Acculturation affected mainly Mexican-Americans who came into first contact with the American culture and caused changes within their culture (Cuellar, Arnold, & Maldonado, 1995). Mexican-Americans who were affected by acculturation had a crucial change in their beliefs, attitudes, and behaviors towards folk healing because the adaptation of the American culture influenced their thinking process. The degree of change is based on the extent to which Mexican-Americans lost their native cultural traits and adapted the Anglo culture. Folk healing is a healing skill that Mexican-Americans and Mexicans learned through relatives and family members but some healers learned the skill healing by their grandparents and parents while others are believe to be born with the gift to heal. For centuries curanderos have been using healing methods such as the egg for the evil eye, herbs for physical aches, lotions for muscle aches, the barridas or spiritual cleansing for the evil spirits and so forth thus making them so widely recognized in the Mexican community. There are different types of curanderos who have different types of healing powers. For example, there are those who are called curanderos because they focused on healing with herbs and natural remedies and some have the ability to know about the future. There are others who are called shamans or shape shifters because they have the ability to shift from being a human to an animal, and they mainly use their power for evil. There are also the ones that are called yerberos or naturistas because they focused on healing with natural remedies. On the other hand there are the witches, the ones that have the magic/power to do the spiritual cleansing or that deal mainly with magic whether is good or evil. There are illnesses that compel people to seek curanderos because they have some knowledge of curanderismo and might practice home remedies on rare occasions, but there are Mexican-Americans or Mexicans who do not believe in curanderismo because its effectiveness has not been proven reliable. There are people who believe that curanderismo is dying due to the lack of knowledge, practice and the assimilation of the dominant American culture. Nevertheless researchers have investigated and done research in an attempt to prove that curanderismo has not died out, but on the contrary its popularity has increased since Mexican-Americans and Mexicans have come to terms with their beliefs and culture. The Spanish language and the belief in curanderismo were not accepted in the American culture because traditional characteristics were considered a violation of the norms, and acculturation was the only possible option for Mexican-Americans in order to be accepted in society (Trotter and Chavira, 1997). Acculturation not only influence the way Mexican-Americans believe, think, and behave but it also change their heritage such as language, ethnic pride, identity, ethnic interaction , cultural heritage and generational proximity (Orozco, Thompson, Kapes, & Montgomery, 1993). The acceptance of another culture attempted to diminished traditions among Mexican-Americans and Mexicans but curanderismo has not vanished because there are still individuals who believe and practice healing remedies. Curanderismo has gone through drastic changes because Mexican-Americans and Mexicans have undergone educational and cultural transformation that have change the way in which they perceive culture, and the negative attitudes against curanderismo must be reevaluated because it has gained trust and acceptance in the Mexican-American society as an alternative method of healing. The negative attitudes against curanderismo have disappeared (Trotter and Chavira, 1997). Research has been done to support the notion that curanderismo is still been practiced among Mexican communities regardless of their level of education, environment and age; also to increase awareness in the subject and to prove its effectiveness. Participants, 163 females and 37 males from South Texas and Mexico voluntarily agree to take part in the study, filled out a two part survey based on the five point Likert Scale and seven healers were interviewed. The responses were collected and analyzed in order to measure their beliefs, practices and knowledge in curanderismo, and to prove that curanderismo is still a common practice among Mexican-Americans and Mexicans. The qualitative portion included an in depth one to one interview composed of seven open ended questions and were based on the healer's knowledge in folk healing. The data collected was used to clarify areas that were important for the research. Purpose of the Research The purpose of the research was to examine, analyze, and compare the beliefs, attitudes and knowledge of curanderismo from Mexican Americans that reside in South Texas to Mexicans from Mexico. The data was gathered through both qualitative and quantitative data gathering procedures in order to test if curanderismo influence the beliefs, behavior and attitudes of the young and the old participants. Also if the place where Mexican Americans and Mexican reside along with their level of acculturation have any influence in their attitudes towards curanderismo, and if Mexicans who live in the rural areas of Mexico believe and practice curanderismo more often than Mexicans who live in the urban areas of Mexico. The questions used for the interview focused on the healer's knowledge and attitude towards folk healing.
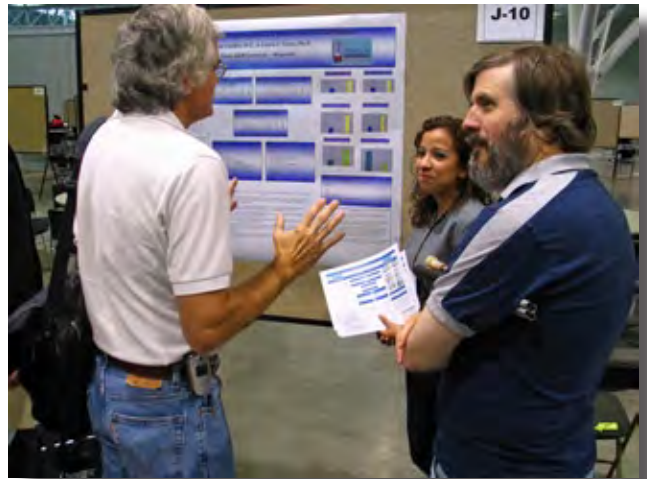
Can Empirical Research Lie? On Creating More Trustworthy Literatures

Cody D. Christopherson & George S. Howard - University of Notre Dame

The rationale for insisting on properly designed rigorous studies is to ensure the construction of research literatures that are not influenced by systematic biases of any sort. Once a literature is established whatever answers it gives (usually via meta-analysis) are accepted by the research community as verisimilitude. The results of our favored statistical techniques are best understood when significant relationships are present; it is notoriously difficult and problematic to interpret null results. Thus, statistically significant findings are more likely to be praised, published, and widely read while null findings are unlikely to enter the public domain by any means. This becomes problematic when experimental tests of a phenomenon or theory yield both null and non-null results. Emphasizing only non-null results creates the possibility of an in-built bias for literally all research literatures. This bias is known as the file drawer effect. The file drawer effect has been known and written about for many years. However, the effect that this file drawer has on research literatures has not been probed empirically until now.

Does frustration lead to aggression? Are eclectic therapists more effective than single-theory therapists? Does watching violence on television early in life lead to an increase in violent acts later in life? Do larger monetary rewards lead to better sales performance? Does remote intercessory prayer produce physical/medical improvements? Do humans possess the power to communicate telepathically? All such questions are potentially answerable if one conducts a meta-analysis of the relevant research literature. Of course, experimental flaws might skew the results, but one hopes the present review processes that journals employ winnow out the overwhelming majority of poorly designed studies. But even assuming methodologically sound studies, can one trust the answers that research literatures give?

If there is a bias in the construction of a research literature, a meta-analysis of the biased literature will reflect that bias. For example, during the reign of Trofim Lysenko as director of Soviet biology (roughly 1940-1964) results of genetics studies that supported Marxist interpretations (e.g., Lysenkoist) were preferred to studies that supported other (e.g., Mendelian) interpretations. A meta-analysis over literatures of journals assembled in Soviet countries during this period would likely be more favorable to Lysenkoist answers than would be found in literatures assembled from journals where no theoretical bias intervened in the selection of studies for publication.
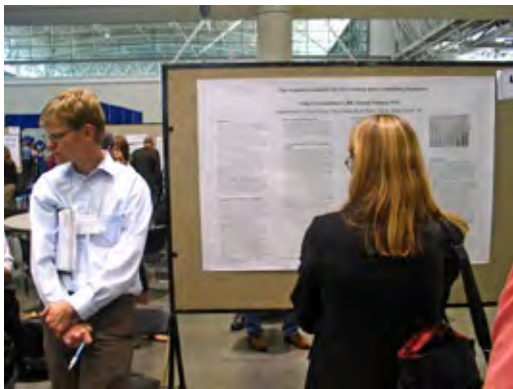
Thus, it is an important scientific activity to examine whether any particular bias is present when our existent research literatures were being assembled. For example, if the literature on psychotherapy outcome were biased toward finding therapy effective (perhaps because the majority of journal editors and reviewers were themselves clinically trained) then the "25% better" answer given above would be somewhat misleading because it overestimated the True2 value of psychotherapy in the studies reported. However, to say that a literature is biased is not to say that it is worthless. For example, if the Truth was that psychotherapy was worth only a 22% increase over control clients, psychotherapy would still be very effective, but not quite as effective as the (slightly biased) meta-analysis implies. In such cases, we might conclude that the existent literature certainly is "good enough" even if not totally accurate. But what if the Truth is that psychotherapy is completely worthless and the 25% superiority of treatment groups due totally to the selection bias of publishing positive results?

In this paper, a new method will be described that attempts to test the impact of the file drawer effect on specific research literatures. The results of the file drawer on four separate psychological research literatures will be presented. The literature covering implementation intentions, remote intercessory prayer, the Mozart effect, and Psi are all ideal literatures for showing the inadequacy of traditional meta-analysis based on conflicting results found by various meta-analytic studies of these literatures. These literatures are ideal largely because of the controversy found in the empirical research. For example, in Psi research there are two researchers who have reached virtually opposite conclusions using a similar data set. The solution offered here involves "restarting" each literature with a mini-set of experiments with all results (significant and null alike) included in the analysis. There are several ways to assemble literatures that are free of file drawer effects. Sadly, all these solutions incur steep costs. One way would be to abandon classical inferential statistics and instead employ Bayesian statistics. All findings (from methodologically adequate studies) are equally important from a Bayesian perspective. Thus, there would be no preference for significant positive results in a Bayesian literature. Once a literature is assembled, one can then easily determine whether the effect size obtained excludes the null value via meta-analysis.

A second way to remove file drawer effects would be for authors to submit only their literature review and methods sections. Editors and reviewers would base acceptance/rejection upon these sections alone. Once accepted, authors would submit their entire paper to be published. This procedure was suggested by Walster and Cleary (1970). Both of these solutions incur large costs, so the field likely will not adopt them. Instead the field might from time to time invite a researcher to construct a new mini-literature, like the ones presented herein, to test our confidence in a particular literature.

Finally, the earlier suggestion, that common methodologies periodically be tested (and perhaps improved) by research on research methods, is not unique to psychology. All sciences operate in this "two steps forward, perhaps one step backward manner." As the philosopher of science Stephen Toulmin (1961) put it, A man (sic) demonstrates his rationality not by a commitment to fixed ideas, stereotyped procedures, and immutable concepts but by the manner in which and the occasions on which he changes those ideas, procedures and concepts. (p.5)

Science, being the paradigmatic form of rationality, is not exempt from this edict to continually test and improve its procedures and methodologies.

Mindfulness Meditation: Physiological Effects and Clinical Applications

Amara N. Davis - University of Massachusetts

Eastern wisdom has long acknowledged the many benefits enjoyed by practitioners of meditation. It is only now, in the 21st century, that Westerners are fully becoming aware of these numerous neurological, cognitive, behavioral and psychological benefits that can be achieved through a mindfulness meditative approach to life and to treatment. Mindfulness meditation can be used both as a tool for maintaining and improving on a healthy lifestyle, and as a treatment for dealing with the many disorders and afflictions that people suffer from on a daily basis. While researchers have noted many of the physical effects that meditation has on the human brain, relatively little is still known about the processes through which meditation works, and how it achieves the many beneficial effects that we have observed in cognition and psychological functioning. However, continued study of meditation will likely reveal at least some of the mechanisms through which meditation works. With the quickly growing field of neuropsychology, we will not have to wait long for continued research to provide us with a more complex model of the many neurological processes associated with meditation. Past research has already provided us with a basic foundation on which to build. Known physiological effects of meditation include a decrease in the effects of age on gray matter volume in the brain, increases in regional cerebral blood flow in the frontal and occipital brain regions along with decreased cerebrovascular resistance, and positive alterations in brain and immune functioning (Davidson, et al., 2003; Jevnin, et al., 1996; Pagnoni and Cekic, 2007). During research on the effects of meditation many complex trends in neurotransmitter activity have also been observed, prompting Newberg and Iversen (2003) to develop a new model of the brain functioning during meditation which integrates these neurotransmitter systems. All of these findings provide us with evidence that mindfulness meditation is a real and tangible mental process that has discernible physical characteristics in the brain. While meditation affects many areas of the brain, there is considerable activation of the prefrontal cortex region which is primarily associated with cognition and executive processing. The act of being mindful is not without effort, but rather depends on continuous engagement of the prefrontal cortex, so that the mind does not revert back to 'automatic' systems of operation such as the more primitive hypothalamus and limbic systems (Schwartz, et al., 2005). By engaging the consciousness or brain to focus on the present, meditation can enhance attentional focus. An on-going meditation practice has shown to reduce the age-related decline in attentional processing, as well as increase efficiency in executive attentional networks (Chan and Woollacott, 2007; Pagnoni and Cekic, 2007). These findings show the clear connection between meditation and improved attentional focus and provide numerous possibilities for further exploration. The ability of meditative practice to slow some of the aging effects in cognitive functioning also holds immense promise for future development and incorporation into preventive health and psychological care. Many clinical applications have also been found through research done on meditation; mindfulness meditation can be effective in treating a broad range of psychological and behavioral problems. Teaching mindfulness skills and techniques can immediately help to lower anxiety and stress, as well as depressive symptoms (Barhofer, et al., 2007; Davidson, Goleman and Schwartz, 1976; Lee, et al, 2007). By learning to focus on the present, especially when the target symptoms appear, a person begins to separate themselves and their experience of the present from their unwanted symptoms. This results in the individual accepting the symptoms that come and go, but not internalizing them, which in turn alleviates much of the stress, anxiety, or depressive state. Mindfulness techniques also work to control unwanted behaviors by increasing awareness of them, the triggers that precede the unwanted behaviors, and the intentional response. These mindfulness techniques or programs have been especially effective at controlling aggressive behavior and obsessive-compulsive behavior, as well as harmful patterns of chemical substance use (Gelderloos, et al., 1991; Schwartz, et al., 2005; Singh, et al., 2007). With most unwanted behaviors awareness is essential; by becoming aware of what triggers one's own unwanted behavior, and then how to intentionally substitute a different behavior, lasting change can be achieved. Mindfulness meditation offers numerous beneficial effects for brain, cognitive, and psychological functioning. On-going practice can also offer many other benefits including a sense of calmness, content, and well-being within the world. While we have discovered a few of the possible applications of mindfulness meditation techniques in clinical psychology, many more possible uses of meditation exist. As research continues to illuminate the many neurological processes through which mindfulness meditation works, new uses and applications will be discovered and incorporated into current therapeutic models. The use of meditation as a preventive measure for the health and well-being of the mind, body and spirit is also among its many benefits; more research in this area will also expand our ability as health care providers to tap this valuable therapeutic and preventive health resource.

Examining Risk Factors, Pornography Use, and Sexual Aggression in Juveniles

Jane E. Harries & Raymod A. Knight - Brandeis University

Juvenile sex offending is a serious problem that commands attention from clinical, research, legal, and community sectors (Barbaree, Seto, Langton, & Peacock, 2001; Knight & Sims-Knight, 2004). Multiple factors have been hypothesized as contributing to the etiology of juvenile sexual offending. Among these proposed factors is exposure to pornography. Because ethical concerns prohibit causational research investigating the effects of pornography on children and adolescents, research has focused on the correlations of the effects of sexual content in the media on the behavior and attitudes of this age group (Malamuth & Huppin, 2005). These studies have uncovered a relation between exposure to sexual content in the media and sexual behavior. It seems reasonable to assume that any detrimental effects found from exposure to this sexual content in the general media would be found at even higher levels with more explicitly pornographic material. Although pornography is one factor that may contribute to the etiology of sexually aggressive behavior, several other developmental antecedents have been identified that covary with sexually aggressive behavior. These include early experiences such as instability in the home environment, neglect, verbal, physical, and sexual abuse; substance abuse, and the presence of certain predisposing personality characteristics. In light of these findings, Malamuth and Huppin (2005) suggested a theory of sexual aggression that allows for the influence of multiple variables rather than any one cause. According to their model, how sexually aggressive an individual becomes following pornography exposure is directly related to the other risk factors for this behavior that he or she possesses. In their review, Malamuth and Huppin found that even after accounting for several other risk factors, pornography use remained a significant predictor of sexually aggressive behavior, suggesting an effect of pornography use independent of risk factors (Malamuth and Huppin, 2005). The aim of the present study was to examine this finding more thoroughly. We added to Malamuth and Huppin's risk factors other factors that have been found to be related to sexual offending. These factors included developmental experiences like caregiver instability, antipathy, vicarious violence, physical abuse, and sexual abuse, as well as concurrent risk factors like high sexualization, ADHD, psychopathy, and substance abuse. The dependent variable was a scale measuring the frequency of sexually coercive behavior. The 307 juvenile sex offenders in the present study were sampled from different inpatient treatment facilities in the states of Maine, Massachusetts, Minnesota, and Virginia. All juveniles had been adjudicated for at least one serious sexual crime, defined as an assault that was sexually motivated and involved physical contact, against a victim of any age. All participants were administered the Multidimensional Assessment of Sex and Aggression (the MASA), a computerized, retrospective, self-report inventory that assesses multiple domains deemed important in the research of sexual aggression (Knight & Cerce, 1999), including social competence, expressive aggression, sadism, juvenile and adult antisocial behavior and aggression, undifferentiated anger, offense planning, and various aspects of sexual behavior (Knight, Prentky, & Cerce, 1994). Scales were created for the risk factors, pornography use, and the dependent variable using factor analysis. Initially, bivariate zero order correlations were calculated among the nine risk factors, the five pornography scales, and the three levels of the dependent variable (frequency of low [kissing, fondling], moderate [oral], and high [attempted or completed intercourse] sexually coercive behavior). Because there are three levels of the dependent variable, three separate correlational analyses were computed. If factors were not correlated with the dependent variable, they were dropped from further analyses. Next, the remaining risk factors were grouped into two broad categories based on the time at which they occurred--developmental antecedents and concurrent risk factors. Hierarchical multiple regressions were calculated with the variables stepped in as follows: first, developmental antecedents, second, the concurrent factors, and third, the specific factor scale for a particular type of pornography use (e.g., early exposure to pornography, heterosexual pornography use, homosexual pornography use, child pornography use, and violent pornography use). Because there are three different levels of the dependent variable, and five different factor scales for pornography, fifteen hierarchical multiple regression models were planned in total for these data. After the correlations were run on the data, two of the planned models were not calculated, because it was found that a specific pornography scale was not significantly correlated with the dependent variable. These were homosexual pornography use with low-level sexual coercion, and homosexual pornography use with high-level sexual coercion. The remaining 13 models followed a similar pattern to that seen in the model for violent pornography use and high-level sexual coercion. In this case because caregiver instability, vicarious violence and physical abuse were not significantly correlated with the dependent variable, they were not included in the hierarchical regression model. In the model, sexual abuse (p < .0001) and substance abuse (p < .0001) significantly predicted sexually coercive behavior, but the use of violent pornography (p > .15) did not account for any additional variance. This same pattern was repeated in the other 12 regression models, where both experiencing sexual abuse and having issues with substance abuse were predictive of the variance in sexually coercive behavior, but no other developmental variables, stable traits, or pornography use were predictive. This was consistent across all 3 levels of the dependent variable--low, medium, or high levels of sexual coercion. In contrast, Malamuth and Huppin (2005) found that when hostile masculinity and sexualization were entered along with pornography use, pornography use was still a significant predictor of sexually aggressive behavior. Although the findings in this study are informative, they should be interpreted with caution and qualification. For instance, other studies in this area have focused on adults, rather than juveniles. It is possible that the antecedents of sexually coercive behavior could differ as a function of age. There are also differences between this and prior studies in the way that the dependent variable was defined and measured. If generalizable this finding could have important implications. It appears that pornography is likely to have a greater effect on certain "high risk" individuals. It may be the case that this additional effect is difficult to distinguish in a sample of high-risk juveniles. Pornography is commonly blamed for a large amount of sexually aggressive behavior and more research should be done to investigate other possible causes. Additionally, findings that sexual abuse and substance abuse both significantly predicted the frequency of sexually coercive behavior in convicted juvenile sex offenders could lead to better prevention strategies in those areas.