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In Brief

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Same-sex Parenting



Adopted children of same-sex and heterosexual couples do not differ in their gender-typed behaviors, according to a study in [Sex Roles](#).

Researchers followed 106 adopted children of lesbian, gay and heterosexual couples for five years, from preschool to elementary-school age, observing the children playing with toys and surveying the parents about their children's gender conforming and

nonconforming behaviors. Overall, the researchers found no significant differences in gender nonconformity between children of same-sex and heterosexual parents at any age.

Early mornings



Even though research suggests that later school start times can help teens get the sleep their developing brains need, only about half of parents support moving high school start times, finds research in [the Journal of Clinical Sleep Medicine](#).

Researchers surveyed 554 parents of 13- to 17-year-olds. Only 51 percent supported moving school start times later. Parents who opposed the switch cited

worries about transportation logistics and about finding time for after-school activities.
DOI: 10.5664/jcsm.6660

Nonbelievers

Most people around the world are biased against atheists, suggests research in *Nature Human Behaviour*. Researchers surveyed 3,256 people in 13 countries in North America, Europe, Asia and the Middle East. Participants read a story about a man who tortured animals as a child and became a murderer. Then, they asked half of the participants: "Which is more probable? (1) The man is a teacher, or (2) the man is a

teacher and does not believe in any gods." They asked the other half: "Which is more probable? (1) The man is a teacher, or (2) the man is a teacher and a religious believer." Though answer 2 is a logical fallacy in both cases, on average, 60 percent of people selected "2" in the atheist version. Only 30 percent of people selected "2" in the believer version. According to the researchers, these results indicate that most people around the world intuitively assume that perpetrators of evil acts are likely to be atheists. Only in Finland and New Zealand did people not show significant bias against atheists. DOI: 10.1038/s41562-017-0151

Stopping sexual assault

A 12-hour sexual assault prevention training program for first-year college women reduced the number of attempted rapes those women experienced by 64 percent—and the number of completed rapes by 31 percent—two years later, compared with a control group in which women were provided informational brochures, finds a study in *Psychology of Women Quarterly*. In the study, 893 women at three Canadian universities took part in the Enhanced Assess, Acknowledge, Act program, which taught them to detect and acknowledge risky situations and use forceful, effective verbal and physical resistance strategies. In addition to experiencing a reduced number of attempted and completed rapes, the women also showed decreases in accepting "rape myths"—such as victims are to blame.

The look of wealth



Clues to your social class may be written in your face, suggests a study in the *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*. Participants viewed 160 face-only photos cropped from online dating profiles; half the photos depicted people with self-reported incomes over \$150,000, while the other half depicted people with incomes under \$35,000. Participants were able to classify the people in the photos as "rich" or "poor" with 68 percent accuracy. Next, researchers repeated the experiment with standardized neutral-expression photos taken in the lab. They found that although accuracy declined, participants could still sort the photos into "rich" and "poor" with greater-than-chance accuracy. In a third experiment, however, **participants could not accurately categorize the photos when all of the people in them were smiling.** The researchers suggest that subtle facial expressions that indicate contentment and lack of stress may distinguish rich and poor people, even when they have ostensibly neutral expressions.

Wanted feelings

People feel more satisfied with their lives when they experience the emotions that they want to experience, regardless of whether those emotions are pleasant or unpleasant, suggests a study in the *Journal of Experimental Psychology: General*. Researchers surveyed 2,324 participants from eight countries about which emotions they wanted to feel and which they actually felt. Most wanted more positive emotions and fewer negative ones, but 11 percent wanted to feel fewer positive emotions and 10 percent wanted more unpleasant ones. For example, someone might want to love an abusive partner less, or someone might want to feel more anger when reading about injustice, the researchers explain. Overall, participants who experienced more of their desired emotions reported greater life satisfaction and less depression.

Armed & dangerous

Police officers are no better than untrained observers at detecting when a suspect is holding a gun or an explosive device, finds research in *Law and Human Behavior*. In three experiments, researchers asked police officers and college students to watch a video: In the first experiment, the video showed a man entering a courthouse, and participants had to decide whether he was holding a gun; in the second, the video showed three men walking through a crowd, and participants had to decide whether one of them was concealing a device in his backpack; and in the third, the video showed two men walking through a crowd, and participants had to decide which one was concealing a device. In all three experiments, police officers performed only slightly better than chance, and no better than college students.

Work-life balance



Women and men report similar difficulty balancing the demands of work and family life, despite a common perception that women feel that conflict more keenly, suggests a meta-analysis in the *Journal of Applied Psychology*. Researchers analyzed 350 studies of work-family conflict with more than 250,000 participants. About half of the studies were from the United States; most of the rest were from Asia and

Europe. There was little overall difference in the amount of work-family conflict felt by men and women, and only small differences when the data were analyzed by subgroup—for example, mothers reported slightly more family interference with work than fathers did.

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Flexitime

Women with flexible work schedules are less likely to reduce their hours after having children, finds a study in *Human Relations*. Researchers examined data from a large longitudinal study in the United Kingdom. Out of 523 women who gave birth between 2010 and 2013, more than half reduced their working hours after their child was born. However, less than one-quarter of those who used flexitime schedules—schedules in which they could set their own working hours within a window of time—reduced their hours. The researchers found that perceived access to flexitime did not help keep women on the job—only actually using it did.

Alcohol use is up



Since 2001, the proportion of U.S. adults who engage in high-risk drinking has spiked, finds a report in *JAMA Psychiatry* that examined survey data from the National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism. In 2012–13, an estimated 29.6 million people reported high-risk drinking at least once per week: five or more drinks at one time for men, four or more for women. The percentage of adults reporting

high-risk drinking increased from 9.7 to 12.6 percent since 2001–02. **High-risk drinking has particularly increased among women, minorities and adults older than 65**, the researchers found.

Buying happiness



Money can make you happier, if you use it to pay for more free time. That's the conclusion of a study in the *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*. Researchers asked almost 4,500 participants how much money they spent each month paying people to do tasks they disliked, and also asked them to rate their life satisfaction. Those who spent more money on time-saving expenses had greater life satisfaction,

even after controlling for income level. In a follow-up experiment, the researchers assigned 60 participants to spend \$40 on a time-saving purchase on one weekend and \$40 on a material purchase on another weekend, then asked them to report their mood that day. Participants felt happier when they spent the money buying time compared with material goods.

Depression and the brain



Major depressive disorder may be associated with structural changes in the brain's white matter (the axons that link different neurons to one another), suggests a study in *Scientific Reports*. Researchers used diffusion-tensor imaging to examine the white matter and MRI brain scans to study the gray matter volume in a sample of 3,461 people with and without depression, drawn from the public UK Biobank

database. There were no significant differences in gray matter volume between the two groups, but those with depression had significantly reduced white matter integrity.

Life lessons from animals?

Children learn moral lessons better from stories with human characters than from stories with anthropomorphic animal characters, suggests a study in *Developmental Science*. Researchers tested **96 preschool-age children**. Each was given 10 stickers and asked to share some of them with another child. Then they listened to one of three stories: a story about sharing with human characters, the same story with anthropomorphic characters or an unrelated story about seeds. Finally, they were given the opportunity to share 10 more stickers with another child. Children who heard the story with human characters significantly increased the number of stickers they shared, while those who heard the anthropomorphic and unrelated story did not.

Cognitive equality

Middle-aged and older women may have a cognitive advantage in countries with more gender equality, suggests a study in *Psychological Science*. Using data from several national and international surveys, the researchers analyzed performance on a verbal memory test for more than 225,000 women and men, ages 50 to 93, from 27 countries. Then, they measured gender equality in each country by testing how many people agreed with the statement: "When jobs are scarce, men should have more right to a job than women." Overall, women from countries with more gender-equal attitudes had better cognitive performance relative to men compared with women in countries with less gender-equal attitudes. Women outperformed men to the greatest degree in Sweden and underperformed men to the greatest degree in Ghana.

Just be you



Interviewing for a new job? If you're well-qualified, you should just try to be yourself rather than present an overly rosy facade, suggests a study in the *Journal of Applied Psychology*.

Researchers studied 1,240 international teachers applying for placements in the United States and 333 lawyers applying for jobs with the U.S. military. They used a questionnaire and face-to-face interviews to evaluate applicants' "self-verification drive," or desire to represent themselves accurately. The researchers found that among highly qualified candidates, teachers high in self-verification had a 73 percent likelihood of being selected compared with 51 percent for those lower in self-verification. For the lawyers, those with high self-verification had a 17 percent likelihood of being selected, while those with lower self-verification had a 3 percent likelihood. These effects of self-verification did not hold true for less qualified candidates, however.

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