Most of our measures of a key cognitive process don’t agree

It’s widely acknowledged that it’s nearly impossible to publish negative results in scientific journals. “We didn’t see anything” is a much harder sell than finding that a hypothesis is clearly right. Findings of no effect tend to either be shuffled off to low-profile journals or left behind as unpublished lab lore.

The high-profile journal Nature, however, made a notable exception this week, publishing a study that tells us that a bunch of methods we have been using to try to measure a key emotional ability don’t seem to be measuring the same thing. The results mean that we don’t have a good way to measure the impact of a concept that is the basis of a key method in therapy.

Inconsistencies

One of the most successful forms of therapy is cognitive behavioral therapy, or CBT. In part, CBT is based on getting people to step back and engage in “cognitive reappraisal.” This requires people to think over a situation that has caused a negative emotional response and find ways to reinterpret it so that it has less impact on them. The ability to engage in this process has been linked to emotional resilience.

Read full article

Comments

https://arstechnica.com/science/2026/11/most-of-our-measures-of-a-key-cognitive-process-dont-agree/