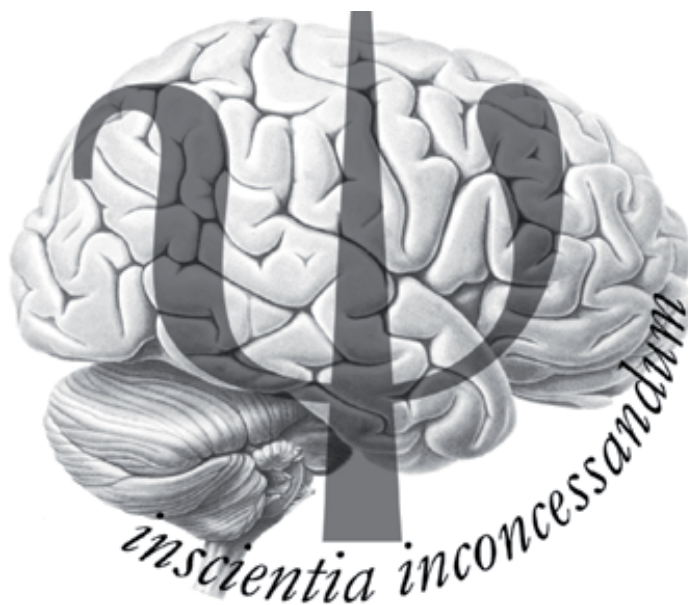


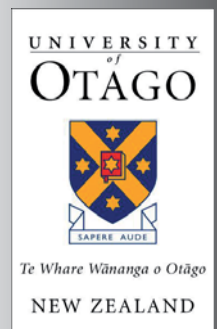
PSYCCOLLOQUY

2013

Department of Psychology
University of Otago



21 November 2013
Mark Parker Seminar Room
University College



Welcome to Psycolloquy 2013

*This year we are pleased to have
Dr Paul Trotman give the keynote address titled
Story, emotion and science*

Paul is a doctor, writer and filmmaker, although not necessarily in that order. His company, PRNfilms makes medical documentaries for TVNZ and TV3, and in the process he has learned a lot about communicating via emotion and story. Swearing to use these secret powers for good he also makes teaching and communication films for health and science professionals.

In addition, there will be presentations of research by students from within the Department of Psychology and a prize for the best student presentation.

Psycolloquy 2013 Committee

Julien Gross
Fiona Jack
Helena McAnally

Special thanks to

David Bilkey
Cara Duffy
Lindsay Robertson
William van der Vliet

Psycholology 2013

8.30 am BREAKFAST

9.00 am **Lisa Labuschagne**

Delay of gratification in 5-year-olds: Strange findings and planned investigation

9.15 am **Hannah Phillips**

Does aniracetam improve short-term memory in pigeons?

9.30 am **Anna Barham**

What's it like to be Brad Pitt or George Clooney? A qualitative study of living with an invisible neurological condition

9.45 am **Aryannah Paul**

Medical students' vs. Psychology students' perceptions of schizophrenia: An interview study

10.00 am **Max Major**

Decision-making and impulsivity in High-Functioning Autism

10.15 am **Celia Guido Mendes**

Does bilingualism enhance conflict monitoring and resolution mechanisms?

10.30 am MORNING TEA

11.00 am KEYNOTE ADDRESS

Paul Trotman

Story, emotion and science

12.15 pm LUNCH

1.30 pm **Jessica Morten**

Explaining differences in eyewitness recall: The contributions of age, intelligence, and memory

1.45 pm **Regina Hegemann**

Isolating contextual bias in fingerprint analysis

2.00 pm **Sarah Morton**
The latent structure of schizotypy: What do we know and where are we going?

2.15 pm **Rosie Marsh**
The relationship of schizotypy features and reaction time intra-individual variability

2.30 pm **Maria Polak**
Vitamin D and depression

2.45 pm AFTERNOON TEA

3.15 pm **Arnika van den Berg**
Perceptions arising from the congruency of racial appearance and surname ethnicity

3.30 pm **Samuel O'Sullivan**
The "right" name *feels* right: The influence of stimulus "fit" on affective experience

3.45 pm **David Barton**
What's in a name?

4.00 pm **Helen Owen**
Truth in text: The influence of language constraints on perceptions of honesty in oneself and others

4.15 pm **Jo Secher**
Modelling agency: How does the way we perceive risk change when we think there's someone behind it?

4.30 pm **Chris Jackson**
Deconstructing death

4.45 pm STUDENT PRIZE PRESENTATION

*We would like to thank **Continuing Education** for supporting **Psychollogy 2013 - the Department of Psychology's presentation day for students' research.***

KEYNOTE ADDRESS

Story, emotion and science

Dr Paul Trotman

PRNfilms

We have been communicating with each other via stories for millennia. We've been using them to sell political, emotional and religious messages for thousands of years. We use them to sell fizzy water, jeans and cars... so why shouldn't we use them to sell science?

The answer is obvious really. Science is based around facts and figures (and who would want it any other way). It's cold, emotionless and analytical because it has to be. But there's a problem with that when it comes to communicating... facts and figures have a very low emotional availability. People don't identify with them, they don't understand them, and they aren't moved by them. Facts and numbers cause people to either (a) ignore them or (b) analyse them and pick them to bits using their prior preconceptions as a starting point. You might think you're unbiased, but you're not. There is oodles of research that shows that when we're reviewing a paper we disagree with, that we are far tougher on the methodology than we are if we agree with its conclusions.

Stories on the other hand, have a high emotional availability; they fire off dopamine in the brain and bypass all of that reasoning shit.

In this talk, I'll tell you about how you can use the dark arts of commercial television to communicate your research to colleagues, funding agencies and the public.

Delay of gratification in 5-year-olds: Strange findings and planned investigation

L. Labuschagne and D. Scarf

Department of Psychology, University of Otago

Previous studies suggest that empathy may be correlated with effortful control (ie, the ability to suppress a dominant behaviour in order to perform a subdominant response). We investigated this relationship in a sample of 26 5-year-old children using the delay-of-gratification choice task, in which children chose whether to receive 1 sticker “Now” or a larger number of stickers “Later”. The children’s parents also filled out the Children’s Behaviour Questionnaire and Empathy Quotient questionnaire. While measures of empathy positively correlated with effortful control ($r = .662, p < .001$) and negatively correlated with impulsivity ($r = -.560, p = .003$), there was no correlation between empathy and performance on the delay-of-gratification task. Similar to 3- and 4-year-old children (Imuta, 2013), 5-year-old children could be classified into high and low delayers, but in contrast to 3-year-olds (Imuta, 2013) they were not at all influenced by the size of the delayed reward. High delayers were also slower to respond on a facial emotion naming task ($r = .890, p < .001$), which suggests that they may simply be more thoughtful and less spontaneous in general. Next, we plan to use a computer-based version of the delay-of-gratification task that will allow us to track both reaction times and eye movements. Reaction times will allow us to see whether high delayers do indeed take longer to make their selection and eye movements may provide a window into the thought processes children employ. We are also interested in reward sensitivity and plan to measure this through changes in skin conductance.

Does Aniracetam improve short-term memory in pigeons?

H. Phillips and M. Colombo

Department of Psychology, University of Otago

Over the past few decades, there has been a mounting interest into cognitive enhancing drugs, or nootropics. As the population ages, diseases such as Alzheimer's are becoming more prevalent, so it is important to attempt to treat the cognitive impairment associated. Nootropics are also used to treat attention disorders in children and, more controversially, as a study aid in neurologically healthy young adults. The current nootropics, however, have a high dependence and abuse risk, along with dangerous side effects, so there is a desire for the development of a safer, perhaps even more effective nootropic to take their place. In the current study, we aim to test the effects of a new nootropic, aniracetam, on short-term memory in healthy pigeons. Pigeons will be trained on the delayed matching-to-sample task, a classic test of short-term memory in animals involving retention of a stimulus across variable retention intervals. Performance will be tested after three doses of aniracetam (50, 100 and 200mg/kg, i.m.). We hypothesise that aniracetam will have a facilitative effect on short-term memory in pigeons, increasing matching accuracy on the delayed matching-to-sample task across different retention intervals. The literature suggests aniracetam has an inverse-U shaped dose-response curve with the optimal dose being around 50-100mg/kg. Therefore, we hypothesise that 100mg/kg will have the greatest improvement on memory, and 50 and 200mg/kg will have a smaller effect. The results of this study will give an indication as to whether aniracetam has a place in improving memory in healthy individuals, in addition to aiding recovery from impairment.

What's it like to be Brad Pitt or George Clooney? A qualitative study of living with an invisible neurological condition

A. H. C. Barham¹, G. J. Treharne¹ and D. L. Snell²

¹Department of Psychology, University of Otago

²Department of Orthopaedic Surgery and Musculoskeletal Medicine, University of Otago Christchurch and Concussion Clinic, Brain Injury Rehabilitation Service, Burwood Hospital, Canterbury District Health Board, Christchurch, New Zealand

This talk will outline a proposed qualitative study in which the aim will be to explore the lived experience of people living with an invisible neurological condition that is either congenital or acquired. Brad Pitt recently announced that he has prosopagnosia, a condition defined as severe difficulty recognising familiar faces, which is commonly congenital. George Clooney reportedly suffers ongoing pain and fatigue resulting from a traumatic brain injury (TBI) received eight years ago. Psychosocial effects of TBI have been documented in a growing body of international quantitative and qualitative research, but surprisingly few studies have focused on the impact of TBI on family life. Very few qualitative studies on prosopagnosia have been published, and most have been single-case clinical studies, although understanding of the neurobiology behind the disorder is developing as technology improves. In the proposed study four individuals with invisible neurological conditions will be interviewed: one man and one woman with congenital prosopagnosia and one man and one woman with an acquired TBI. The specific focus of this study will be the impact of the neurological condition on family life. Participants who have a current partner and children will therefore be recruited. Similarities and differences in their lived experiences will be drawn out using Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis, an established psychological methodology. Each interview transcript will be closely examined in order to generate themes which will then be integrated across participants. This research will have implications for medical and psychological interventions and healthcare policy.

Medical students' vs. Psychology students' perceptions of schizophrenia: An interview study

A. Paul and G. Treharne

Department of Psychology, University of Otago

Research suggests that stigmatisation of people with schizophrenia has not decreased in recent years because the general population still commonly attribute its onset to the character of the individual. Knowledge of genetic causes of schizophrenia is related agreement with the need for pharmacological treatment but not related to the perceived likelihood of improved outcomes. The aim of this study was to investigate perceptions of schizophrenia held by psychology students and medical students to identify similarities and differences in the understandings of people who will potentially go on to provide professional help for individuals with schizophrenia. Leventhal's common sense model is a useful framework for examining beliefs about schizophrenia, which has been applied to individuals with schizophrenia but can also be used to explore beliefs about schizophrenia held by others. Semi-structured interviews were carried out to explore perceptions of schizophrenia using a series of open-ended topic questions based on the core beliefs of the common sense model (symptoms, cause, timeline, consequences and controllability). Participants were four 100-level Psychology students (2 women, 2 men; mean age = 19.5) and four Medical students (2 women, 2 men; mean age = 22.5). Half identified as New Zealand European and the others were of Chinese, Indian, Korean and Middle Eastern descent. The interviews were transcribed and in-depth thematic analysis is being used to generate common themes around the similarities and differences among the participants. The preliminary results suggest that participants describe people with schizophrenia to be consistently dangerous and that participants believe more in behavioural explanations of the onset of schizophrenia than genetic or neurochemical explanations. These beliefs about schizophrenia are likely to perpetuate stigmatisation and demonstrate how further education may help to increase tolerance and optimal support for people with schizophrenia.

Decision-making and impulsivity in High-Functioning Autism

M. Major and L. Franz

Department of Psychology, University of Otago

Electroencephalography (EEG) and a Delay of Gratification task were used to investigate how the frontal-striatal circuits involved in decision-making, in particular self-control and impulsivity, are affected in High-Functioning Autism. Adolescent and adult control participants, and a High-Functioning Autism group completed a computerised task in which they made the decision to either immediately receive a small reward or wait a variable amount of time (ie, Delay-Time) to receive a large reward. The ability to wait for the larger reward is generally acquired earlier, and to a greater extent in typically-developing individuals than in people with Autism. This is thought to result from the prolonged maturation of frontal areas of the brain in the latter group. It was therefore hypothesised that participants with Autism would demonstrate abnormal patterns of brain activity in the frontal-striatal system, and would consistently choose the smaller but immediate reward. Behavioural differences in impulsivity and self-control were found to vary as a function of age in the control groups, while differences in brain activity appeared to result from planned versus impulsive decision-making strategies. Although preliminary, results revealed that participants with Autism adopted an impulsive decision-making strategy reflected in brain activity that resembled that of the impulsive control participants.

Does bilingualism enhance conflict monitoring and resolution mechanisms?

C. Guido Mendes, M. Taumoepeau and J. Miller

Department of Psychology, University of Otago

Several studies point to the idea that proficiency in more than one language leads to positive cognitive gains, namely in what concerns conflict monitoring and resolution (Adesope et al., 2010; Bialystok, 2007, 2010, 2011; Bialystok et al., 2012; Costa et al., 2009; Green, 1998; Hilchey & Klein, 2011; Meuter & Allport, 1999). According to this research, the process of acquiring two languages and of simultaneously managing those languages, inhibiting one of them so that the other one can be accessed and used without interference, allows bilinguals to develop skills that extend into other domains. In the present study, we examine whether bilinguals and monolinguals perform differently on an Attention Networks Control task (Cued Reaction Time task + Flanker task, following Costa et al., 2009). We are interested in identifying which aspects of attentional control – if any – benefit from the bilingual experience. Following the conclusions of previous research, we predict a bilingual advantage in overall response times. We also predict an increased bilingual advantage with increased demands, with possible bilingual advantage in the Flanker effect.

Explaining differences in eyewitness recall: The contributions of age, intelligence, and memory

J. Morten, F. Jack and R. Zajac

Department of Psychology, University of Otago

Two eyewitnesses describing the same event can give reports that differ substantially in both detail and accuracy. Studies of eyewitness age have typically shown that older adults and children provide less information, and are less accurate, than younger adults. Furthermore, measures of verbal intelligence, non-verbal intelligence, and memory have all been implicated in eyewitness recall.

We examined eyewitness recall in a sample of children, younger adults, and older adults. Participants saw a brief film clip of a simulated crime and were administered measures assessing intelligence and memory, followed by a cognitive interview assessing participants' memory for the film. From transcripts of these interviews, we calculated the total number of unique pieces of information reported, and the accuracy of these items.

We found that younger and older adults both reported a greater number of details, with higher overall accuracy, than children. Multiple regression analyses revealed that age group could predict 18% of the variance in the number of details reported, and 14% of the variance in the accuracy of those details. Together, age group and our cognitive measures explained 34% of the variance in the amount of information reported, and 19% of the variance in the accuracy of this information.

This is only the second study to examine the quantity and quality of eyewitness recall across the lifespan, and the first to isolate the contribution of individual differences. We have replicated the age-related deficits in children's – but not older adults' – recall relative to that of younger adults. Individual differences in age, intelligence and visual memory were all independently related to verbal recall, although these could not fully explain the differences in the quantity and quality of recall. Clearly, other factors are implicated.

Isolating contextual bias in fingerprint analysis

R. Hegemann, N. Osborne and R. Zajac

Department of Psychology, University of Otago

Recent research has questioned the reliability of fingerprint evidence, suggesting that it might be vulnerable to considerable bias. Two studies have shown that highly graphic crime scene images presented prior to pairs of fingerprints – each comprising a ‘crime scene’ print and a ‘suspect’ print – biases participants towards making ‘match’ decisions. The mechanism behind this effect, however, remains unclear. First, previous research does not allow us to determine whether the effect related specifically to the crime-related photographs, or whether it is a mere consequence of seeing photographs, regardless of their content. The aim of Experiment 1 was to examine this possibility by exposing participants to neutral photographs. Decisions made by these participants did not differ from those made by a group of participants who were not exposed to any photographs, suggesting that the effect is specifically related to the crime context. Furthermore, in previous research, the reason why participants would increase match – and not mismatch – decisions is unclear. In Experiment 2, we examined whether the effect is due to an increased motivation to solve the crime, or a greater likelihood of making a match decision regardless of the outcome. We did this by introducing a situation in which a match would not advance the investigation, but a mismatch would. Specifically, in each fingerprint pair, one print was labelled ‘crime scene’; the other was labelled ‘investigating officer’. Prior to seeing each fingerprint pair, participants saw either a low emotion crime-related image, a high emotion crime-related image, or no image. Contrary to our prediction, the mean number of matches made on ambiguous stimuli increased with increasing emotional context, suggesting that contextual information biased participants towards making a match decision regardless of its implication for the investigation.

The latent structure of schizotypy: What do we know and where are we going?

S. E. Morton¹ and R. J. Linscott^{1,2}

¹Department of Psychology, University of Otago

²Department of Psychiatry and Psychology, Maastricht University, Maastricht, the Netherlands

Since their conception, mental disorders have been treated as discrete classes, separate from health, prodromal states, and each other. While it makes practical sense to provide categories, imposed boundaries lack scientific backing and are essentially arbitrary. Such methods of categorisation hinder research progress, as well as diagnosis and treatment accuracy. The present paper will use schizotypy (schizophrenia risk) to illustrate the ways in which we are able to investigate underlying structure, the weaknesses limiting this field of research, and the opportunities that may be afforded should limitations be overcome.

Recent taxometric analyses (coherent cut kinetics; CCK) have revealed overwhelming support for a categorical structure of schizophrenia risk. However, the majority of studies have relied on a single CCK method applied to self-report data. It is clear that, should conclusions be made regarding the underlying structure of schizotypy, results should be replicable across CCK and latent variable modeling (LVM) methods. We compared the results of CCK, factor, and latent profile analyses (LPA) to demonstrate the consistency across these methods. While a four-class model provided the best fit, correlations between membership probabilities calculated from the CCK and LPA results provided support for a two-class model. The second significant limitation of taxometric research is the reliance on subjective measures. The need to conduct analyses on objective and combined (subjective and objective) data, plus the implications of these steps, will be discussed.

The relationship of schizotypy features and reaction time intra- individual variability

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the Netherlands*

Background. Intra-individual variability (IIV) in reaction time is increased in schizophrenia and schizotypy. However, it is not clear whether this relationship is specific to particular features of schizotypy. The aim of this cross-sectional study was to assess the relationship between cognitive-perceptual, interpersonal and disorganised features of schizotypy and increased IIV.

Methods. Undergraduates from the University of Otago (n = 459, age M = 20.3) completed the Schizotypal Personality Questionnaire (SPQ) to assess the presence and features of schizotypy, and two tasks from which reaction time IIV was obtained, a continuous performance test and a simple motor reaction time task. **Results.** Interpersonal features of schizotypy were significantly associated with greater IIV independent of mean reaction time, with 4.1% of the variance accounted for. Cognitive-perceptual and disorganised features were not significantly associated with increased IIV.

Implications. A specific impairment may lead to greater IIV in interpersonal schizotypy, potentially due to dopamine dysregulation in the prefrontal cortex. As schizotypy is a personality type occurring on the schizophrenia continuum, this research is also applicable to schizophrenia.

Vitamin D and depression

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Vitamin D has recently gained popularity as a ‘mood elevator’ and is widely taken in supplemental form by the general population. The aim of the current study was to investigate the association between vitamin D level and depression symptoms in a non-clinical young adult sample living in Dunedin. A cross-sectional sample of 615 young adults [381 women (62%) and 234 men (38%), mean age 19.5 years] completed an initial questionnaire including demographics (age, gender, and ethnicity) and a depression scale (Centre for Epidemiological Studies Depression Scale, CES-D), then reported on time spent outdoors during daylight hours for 13 consecutive days. Finally, we measured their height and weight and obtained a venous blood sample for vitamin D analysis. Vitamin D was used to predict depression scores, adjusting for age, gender, ethnicity, BMI and time spent outdoors. Prevalence of low vitamin D was high even in this young age group whereby 32% of participants had vitamin D below 50nmol/L in early autumn. Participants with low vitamin D had higher depression scores ($r = .152$, $p < 0.001$). For each standard deviation increase in 25(OH)D, there was a 4.5 point decrease on the CES-D score. This association was significant after adjusting for age, gender, ethnicity, BMI, and time spent outdoors. The findings support the investigation of an appropriately designed, randomised controlled trial of supplementation with vitamin D among young adults in the general population.

Perceptions arising from the congruency of racial appearance and surname ethnicity

A. M. van den Berg and J. Halberstadt
Department of Psychology, University of Otago

Previous research has shown that racially ambiguous or ‘mixed-race’ faces are judged differently depending on the ethnicity of the names associated with them. The goal of my research is to determine whether the congruence between a mixed-race individual’s name and her ethnic appearance influences first impressions. Participants viewed Chinese and European faces, described as “mixed race”, whose names were either fully ethnically congruent (both first and last names matched) or partially incongruent (first or last name mismatched) with their ethnic appearance. Participants were asked to rate the competency and likability of each individual.

Overall, Chinese faces were rated as more competent but less likable than European faces, but the differences were exacerbated when the faces had incongruent surnames. Incongruent first names had no effect. Results may indicate that more attention is paid to the racial appearance of individuals with incongruent surnames, and this results in more extreme trait ratings.

A second study, still in progress, uses more racially ambiguous face stimuli, and includes a question about perceived racial appearance in order to test for the effect of surname congruence on race perception.

The “right” name *feels* right: The influence of stimulus “fit” on affective experience

S. O’Sullivan and J. Halberstadt

Department of Psychology, University of Otago

Numerous studies show that names can be non-arbitrarily assigned to objects. A well-researched phenomenon, the “Bouba-Kiki” effect, is that people believe certain names “fit” with certain shapes, for example, “round” names (pronounced with rounded mouth movements, such as “Bouba”) with round shapes. I report two studies that go beyond these perceptions of fit to examine people’s attitudes toward shapes with congruent names (e.g., a round “Bouba”) relative to incongruent names (eg, an angular “Bouba”). In the studies, participants who learnt the names of novel shapes subsequently favoured congruently named stimuli on both explicit and implicit attitude measures. Follow-up studies examined affective reactions to congruently named shapes using facial recognition software, and also explored psychological mechanisms for the results, such as processing fluency, familiarity and learning ease. The findings have implications for product development, face naming, the evolution of language, and affective experience in everyday perception.

What's in a name?

D. N. Barton and J. Halberstadt

Department of Psychology, University of Otago

Previous research using the “bouba/kiki” effect has shown that a naming bias exists in the way people name shapes. The present study examined if a similar bias exists in the way people name human faces. Participants completed two experiments; first with caricatures and then real faces. Using a pre-test they were first asked to name a selection of round and spiky faces with a preferred name from a selection of round and spiky names. The results of the pre-test showed that participants preferred naming round faces with round names and spiky faces with spiky names. The pre-test was followed by an experiment in which their response times were measured in an Implicit Association Task (IAT) using congruent and incongruent face/name pairs taken from the pre-test. The results of the IAT showed that participants implicitly liked congruent face/name stimuli over incongruently matched stimuli, as response times for congruent blocks were significantly faster than incongruent blocks. This suggests that the way people name faces is not arbitrary. People prefer names which are congruent with a person's face shape and like that person more compared to when the person's name is incongruent with their face.

Truth in text: The influence of language constraints on perceptions of honesty in oneself and others

H. E. Owen and J. Halberstadt

Department of Psychology, University of Otago

The rise of social media has arguably led to a simplification of language as long letters are replaced by short tweets. Aside from the social consequences of this shift, constraints on language may have cognitive and emotional implications for both the communicator and recipient. The aim of this research is to investigate the effects of simple language on perceptions of honesty. Study 1 revealed that authors of simple, concise statements were considered more honest and self-reflective, even after controlling for the perceived accuracy of the content of what they wrote. In study 2, we hypothesise that authors of simpler statements see themselves as more honest and, as a result, engage in more honest behaviour. Participants are forced to use simple or complex language in their stories after which they play a dice-game, and are trusted to allocate themselves an appropriate amount of money based on how lucky they are. As a measure of their self-control, they are also given an unspecified amount of time to engage in creative brainstorming. It is plausible that using complex language depletes self-regulatory resources, thereby reducing self-control and increasing dishonesty when opportunities to lie are available.

Modelling agency: How does the way we perceive risk change when we think there's someone behind it?

J. Secher and J. Halberstadt

Department of Psychology, University of Otago

Risk perception research dates back to the 1960s, but it is only recently that researchers have begun to take an interest in hazards involving deliberately acting human agents, which I refer to as 'malicious' hazards.

Perhaps the best example of a contemporarily important malicious hazard is terrorism, brought to the fore of the world's consciousness by 9/11, and its pervasive international ripple effect. Governments in several liberal democracies have introduced legislation to combat the perceived threat of terrorism, usually by inviting a willing electorate to surrender certain civil liberties in exchange for greater levels of protection. Governments also tend to adopt stiff rhetoric when talking about crime. But what is it about these malicious hazards? Are they somehow different to other hazards studied in the past? Are people more prone to overestimating them?

I discuss the history of risk perception research briefly and conclude that whilst it sheds some light on how malicious hazards are perceived differently, it is contradictory in parts and can't fully account for it.

Experiments show that malicious hazards are indeed overestimated compared with their normative death toll and that anger, an emotion frequently associated with perceived violations against oneself or others, when experimentally induced, seems to cause hazards to be more pessimistically estimated contrary to the claims of the Appraisal-Tendency Framework. I argue that anger is a potential contributor to inflated risk perception, but also present findings showing that the cognitive perception that a human agent is involved in the occurrence of a hazard is sufficient, independently of anger, to prompt greater perceived risk. I conjecture that this effect is explicable in terms of the fundamental attribution error.

Deconstructing Death

C. M. Jackson and J. Halberstadt

Department of Psychology, University of Otago

Death is inevitable—and to many western, educated human participants, terrifying. Death awareness (or mortality salience) is at odds with our instinct for self-preservation and this juxtaposition causes anxiety. To reduce this anxiety, humans believe (both symbolically and literally) that parts of themselves will become immortal. The current mortality salience paradigm (asking participants to reflect on their own death) is robust, but individualistic; the participant reflects on the experience alone. We facilitated 28 group discussions ($n = 115$) of three to six participants who recently reflected on their own death or their first year as a university student. Death anxiety was measured once after the mortality salience manipulation and once after the discussion. Participants also rated their feelings of comfort, closeness, and trust with every group member. Contrary to the wealth of literature, death anxiety in the “think about death” (death) condition was lower than the “think about university” (control) condition ($p = .099$). Additionally, participants rated others and were rated as more comfortable in the control condition than in the death condition ($p = .025$ and $p = .006$, respectively). Practical implications, religious implications, and future directions to be discussed...