

Perspectives on Psychological Science

<http://pps.sagepub.com/>

Introduction to the Special Section on Research Practices

Barbara A. Spellman

Perspectives on Psychological Science 2012 7: 655

DOI: 10.1177/1745691612465075

The online version of this article can be found at:

<http://pps.sagepub.com/content/7/6/655>

Published by:



<http://www.sagepublications.com>

On behalf of:



[Association For Psychological Science](http://www.sagepub.com/content/7/6/655)

Additional services and information for *Perspectives on Psychological Science* can be found at:

Email Alerts: <http://pps.sagepub.com/cgi/alerts>

Subscriptions: <http://pps.sagepub.com/subscriptions>

Reprints: <http://www.sagepub.com/journalsReprints.nav>

Permissions: <http://www.sagepub.com/journalsPermissions.nav>

Introduction to the Special Section on Research Practices

Barbara A. Spellman

University of Virginia

On October 11, 2011, I drove across Virginia to a social psychology conference with my colleague and friend, Brian Nosek. Because Brian had been away on sabbatical, it was our first chance to discuss the unfolding news about the Diederik Stapel case and the storm that seemed to be brewing on all sides (see, e.g., Pashler & Wagenmakers, 2012, this issue). In particular, we talked about our growing worry that many psychology studies were not replicable and our frustration with our inability as scientists to know what was really going on in our field because of various research and publication practices.

And then we each confessed. No, not to fraudulent practices, but to the fact that we had each taken initial steps to try to do something about improving our science. I had two things in the works. The first, with help from Jeff Sherman, became the Special Section on the Sizes of Our Science in the January 2012 issue of *Perspectives on Psychological Science*. The second was a website where people could post the results of replication attempts. (My website, www.psychologyreplications.com, was merged with the very similar but more sophisticated www.psychfiledrawer.org developed by Hal Pashler and colleagues.) Brian asked, "What incentives will people have to post there?" Good question. Although the website now has many fun, interesting, and useful features and is visited often, submissions of replication attempts have been sluggish, and no one has taken me up on my offer to use those submissions as a jumping off point for a meta-analysis in *Perspectives*.

Brian told me about the beginnings of the Open Science Framework, of which the Reproducibility Project (see Open Science Collaboration, 2012, this issue) was going to be the first grand project. I asked him, "What incentives will people have to use the framework or join the project?" Well, Brian is a much better social psychologist than I am: As of September 18, 2012, there were 329 subscribers to the discussion group, more than 150 registered users on the private OSF site (personal communication), and, as you will see, over 70 people invested enough in the project to be authors on this paper. (The authors, you might note, include a large majority of men and, on average, are quite young.)

Later in 2011, Hal Pashler, E. J. Wagenmakers, and I began discussing the creation of the Special Section on Replicability

in Psychological Science. Hal and E. J. started by inviting eight papers for the section. At the same time, perhaps not surprisingly, *Perspectives* received a surge of manuscripts by other authors about replicability and related topics. Then, when word got out that there was going to be a special section, the surge became a deluge. I sent many unsolicited manuscripts to Hal and E. J.—some were incorporated into their special section, but many were rejected as being either redundant with what they already had or too far off the topic of replicability. But three of the latter were too good for me to pass up and they appear here along with one other as the Special Section on Research Practices.

The first article, mentioned above, has 72 authors. It is by the Open Science Collaboration and reports on the goals, structure, and current state of the Reproducibility Project. (The story of how this article ended up in *Perspectives* is a tale unto itself.)

The second article, by Fiedler, Krueger, and Kutzner (2012, this issue), takes issue with some of the drama and the calls for remediation suggested in the Special Section on Replicability. The authors argue that false positives and nonreplicability should not be our major concern as scientists; rather, we need to think seriously about the problem of false negatives—our failures to find effects that are actually there.

Stroebe, Postmes, and Spears (2012, this issue) describe how fraud is and has been discovered in psychological science and elsewhere. We all know that nonreplicability of a study does in no way mean that fraud was involved in its production, but we might suspect (or hope) that difficulties in replication may help uncover fraudulent practices. The authors say that doesn't happen, and they explain how scientific fraud is typically uncovered (by whistleblowers) and how we can do better.

Finally, Gullo and O'Gorman (2012, this issue) remind us that problems of questionable research practices may go

Perspectives on Psychological Science
7(6) 655–656
© The Author(s) 2012
Reprints and permission:
sagepub.com/journalsPermissions.nav
DOI: 10.1177/1745691612465075
<http://pps.sagepub.com>



Corresponding Author:

Barbara A. Spellman, Department of Psychology, University of Virginia School of Law, 580 Massey Road, Charlottesville, VA 22903-1738
E-mail: spellman@virginia.edu

deeper than even doomsayers have suggested—in fact, they may even go all the way down to the brain itself!

Declaration of Conflicting Interests

The author declared no conflicts of interest with respect to the authorship or the publication of this article.

References

- Fiedler, K., Kutzner, F., & Krueger, J. I. (2012). The long way from α -error control to validity proper: Problems with a short-sighted false-positive debate. *Perspectives on Psychological Science*, 7, 661–669.
- Gullo, M. J., & O’Gorman, J. G. (2012). DSM-5 task force proposes controversial diagnosis for dishonest scientists. *Perspectives on Psychological Science*, 7, 689.
- Open Science Collaboration. (2012). An open, large-scale, collaborative effort to estimate the reproducibility of psychological science. *Perspectives on Psychological Science*, 7, 657–660.
- Pashler, H., & Wagenmakers, E. J. (2012). Editors’ introduction to the special section on replicability in psychological science: A crisis in confidence? *Perspectives in Psychological Science*, 7, 528–530.
- Stroebe, W., Postmes, T., & Spears, R. (2012). Scientific misconduct and the myth of self-correction in science. *Perspectives on Psychological Science*, 7, 670–688.