University of Groningen

Can positive emotions improve physical health?

Brown, Nick

DOI:
10.33612/diss.99196913

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Document Version
Publisher's PDF, also known as Version of record

Publication date:
2019

Link to publication in University of Groningen/UMCG research database

Citation for published version (APA):
Brown, N. (2019). *Can positive emotions improve physical health? an examination of some claims from positive psychology*. University of Groningen. https://doi.org/10.33612/diss.99196913

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Propositions

to accompany the defence of the thesis

"Can Positive Emotions Improve Physical Health?"

Nicholas J. L. Brown / 4 November 2019

1. Peer review does not always do a good job of identifying, and requiring justification for, cases where authors have either essentially invented their own statistical methods (cf. Chapters 2, 5, and 7), or used methods so complex that nobody can assess them (Chapter 6).
2. Interventions ought not only to produce benefits on average across the experimental group; they should also produce benefits for a substantial majority of participants in that group (cf. Chapter 4).
3. Claims to have found a statistical construct that predicts health outcomes better than diet, exercise, and smoking should be treated with caution (cf. Chapter 5).
4. When the idea that "A single study found a result at $p < .05$, therefore an effect exists" is combined with the apparent authority of machine learning, some strange ideas are going to emerge (cf. Chapter 6).
5. It is possible for a scientific article to capture the imagination of the media or the general public without providing any evidence for the popular interpretation of its findings (cf. Chapter 7).
6. Using a sample of 76 participants to fit a model that has 71 parameters is unlikely to lead to great scientific insights (cf. Chapters 2 and 3).
7. The fact that a statistical artifact can be reliably reproduced does not mean that it reliably reveals anything about the universe (Chapters 3, 5).
8. Affirming the consequent is a logical fallacy, but it's the basis of a very large proportion of human judgement.