

Advancing our science by considering novel methodological approaches

Teresa Corbett Health Psychology is a broad topic area that focuses on how psychological, behavioral, and cultural factors influences physical health and illness. There are many questions to be asked about a wide range of issues, and a variety of ways in which to answer them. With such complexity, how are we sure that we are measuring the correct construct or using methodology that is best for the question we have?

Floor M. Kroese Health Psychology is a broad topic area that focuses on how psychological, behavioral, and cultural factors influences physical health and illness. There are many questions to be asked about a wide range of issues, and a variety of ways in which to answer them. With such complexity, how are we sure that we are measuring the correct construct or using methodology that is best for the question we have?

As scientists, we are constantly challenged to learn more about methodologies and novel approaches to conducting research. With so much to learn, it is easy to become overwhelmed and be tempted to opt-out of engaging with novel- and often confusing descriptions of- complex methodological approaches. However, as Robert Pirsig famously wrote "*The real purpose of the scientific method is to make sure nature hasn't misled you into thinking you know something you actually don't know.*" Using inappropriate research methods can lead to erroneous or incomplete answers. It is crucial that we endeavour to keep up-to-date with methodological advances, so that the field can continue to develop.

In this special of the European Health Psychologist, we sought to introduce you to some of the exciting and useful methods used in Health Psychology research today.

In the first article, with a focus on qualitative approaches, Morrison et al describe the Person-Based Approach to planning, optimising, evaluating and implementing behavioural health interventions. In this article, the group shares an insight into their successful methods for

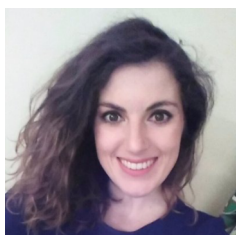
intervention development, as the University of Southampton's Centre for Clinical and Community Applications of Health Psychology celebrates a decade of the LifeGuide research programme. The group has spent the last 10 years developing numerous interventions that have proved consistently engaging and effective.

Noone et al have contributed a primer on how to use Network Meta-analysis in Health Psychology, introducing the key conceptual issues regarding NMA and a step-by-step tutorial on how to conduct a NMA.

Peters and Crutzen have written an introduction and tutorial on the use of CIBER (confidence interval based estimation of relevance) to help researchers to ensure that they are targeting the most important determinants of behaviour in their studies.

And finally, Gillebaart describes current examples of combining explicit and implicit measures when measuring health dilemmas. The author also explains some of the potential and pitfalls of applying implicit measures to health dilemmas.

These articles aim to introduce you and familiarise you with some of the current methodological challenges and opportunities in Health Psychology. We thank the authors for their contributions and hope that the readers find this issue useful, challenging, engaging, and above all, inspiring.



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