**Peer Review and Communication History**

**MS Title**: Sadder ≠ Wiser: Depressive Realism is not Robust to Replication

**Author Names**: Amelia S. Dev, Don A. Moore, Sheri L. Johnsonand Karin T. Garrett

**Submitted:** Aug 29, 2022

Streamlined review

**Cover letter**

Alloy and Abramson’s 1979 paper on depressive realism sparked an extensive literature, including scientific and lay publications which continue to appear. It seems that both laypeople and psychological scientists remain largely unaware of the strength of the empirical evidence for depressive realism. Books and popular press articles (in outlets such as *Psychology Today*, *The New Yorker*, and *Vice*) about depressive realism have been published in the last several years. In our experience discussing the effect with clinical and social psychology colleagues, most express continued belief in its plausible veracity. Over the last four decades, authors reviewing the depressive realism literature have suggested several key refinements to improve tests of depressive realism, but to our knowledge, no studies have sought to incorporate them all. The manuscript we are submitting to *Collabra: Psychology*, titled “Sadder ≠ Wiser: Depressive Realism is not Robust to Replication”, is a well-powered, preregistered study that attempts to replicate the depressive realism effect, incorporating the aforementioned key refinements. To increase generalizability, we tested for depressive realism in two samples. We utilize a classic contingency task but also introduce a stronger measure of illusory control, and we extend our study of bias in depression to an overconfidence task. Finally, we assess multiple mental health symptoms that may be relevant to depressive realism. Our manuscript represents a rigorous addition to the evidence against depressive realism and has important clinical implications. Understanding which biases reliably manifest in depression is necessary in identifying risk factors and improving existing treatments for depression.

We would like to request streamlined review. In the past year, this manuscript was reviewed and rejected at *Psychological Science* twice. We appealed the initial rejection and were granted an opportunity to re-submit the manuscript upon collection of additional data, which we pursued. However, the manuscript was ultimately rejected. In our second round of reviews, the reviewers expressed concerns about potential curvilinear effects and measurement error driving reported null effects for the contingency task. In response, we tested for curvilinear effects and conducted models including a trial-level random effect to better account for potential measurement error. These improvements are reflected in the submitted manuscript and are expanded upon in the Supplementary Information.

The manuscript was also recently reviewed and rejected at *Organizational Behavior and Human Decision Processes* (*OBHDP*). Editor and reviewer feedback primarily concerned (1) lack of “theory” (i.e., difficulties interpreting our null result); (2) too few studies; and (3) lack of thematic fit for *OBHDP*. One primary suggestion from the reviewers was to test for moderators of the depressive realism effect. As our manuscript contends that the depressive realism effect is elusive at best and absent at worst, we do not believe tests of moderating conditions will address the core underlying question of whether the phenomenon could be reliably demonstrated with strong methods across the population that the theory described. Accordingly, we have not made changes to the manuscript in response to the reviews from *OBHDP*.

Full reviews and editors’ comments will be uploaded with this submission, including all decision letters, reviews, and our appeal letter from our *Psychological Science* submissions. We have not requested permission from previous editors for their comments to be openly available, but would be happy to contact them and request such permission if needed.

We have reviewed *Collabra: Psychology’s* Transparency and Openness policy. Our preregistrations, data, materials, and analysis code can be found on Open Science Framework: [https://osf.io/m2g6p/](https://osf.io/m2g6p/?view_only=66051d03b27b4889ab98dc0170420a53). The timestamped and frozen preregistrations can be found here: <https://osf.io/n3t29/> (Sample One) and <https://osf.io/gm426/> (Sample Two). Additional details on the power analysis and results can be found in the supplementary material.

Thank you for your consideration,

Amelia S. Dev, Don A. Moore, Sheri L. Johnson, and Karin T. Garrett

**Editor Final Decision:** Accept

Sep 1, 2022

Dear Amelia Dev,

I have now had a chance to read over your manuscript “Sadder ≠ Wiser: Depressive Realism is not Robust to Replication”, along with the previous reviews. I was impressed with the thoroughness of the reported studies and convinced by your responses to the reviewers. I am therefore accepting your paper for publication in Collabra: Psychology without further review. Congratulations on this excellent work – I think it will make an important contribution to the literature and I look forward to seeing it published. I hope your experiences with Collabra: Psychology have been positive and that you will continue to consider it as an outlet for your work.

As there are no further reviewer revisions to make, you do not have to complete any tasks at this point.

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Sincerely,  
Yoel Inbar