**Competing Interests**

I declare that I have no known competing financial interests or personal relationships that could have appeared to influence the work reported in this paper.

**Data Accessibility Statement**

All the simulation and analysis scripts (in R and Python) can be found on this paper’s project page on github here: https://github.com/matthewvowels1/minSEM

This repository also contains a tool for automating the reduction of the structure according to a  user defined research question / target effect. Instructions and algorithmic details are provided in the repository readme file.

A prior version of this article was uploaded on arXiv as a preprint and can be found

at https://arxiv.org/abs/2203.13331