

Correction to ‘Using genetic information to test causal relationships in cross-sectional data’

Journal of Theoretical Politics

1–2

©The Author(s) 2016

Reprints and permissions:

sagepub.co.uk/journalsPermissions.nav

DOI: 10.1177/0951629816664421

jtp.sagepub.com



Brad Verhulst

Virginia Commonwealth University, USA

Ryne Estabrook

Northwestern University, USA

Abstract

The authors regret that the coding of the attitude items in the manuscript ‘Using genetic information to test causal relationships in cross-sectional data’ was exactly reversed. The codebook that we were working from for the original paper was the opposite of the actual coding of the raw variables. The purpose of the paper was to present an empirical model for testing causal hypotheses using cross-sectional twin data. The data were used to present readers with an example of how to use the method. Accordingly, the impact of the coding error on the conclusions is minimal. Of course, this has the potential to cause confusion for individuals who are focused on the sign of the relationship between personality and sex attitudes and not on the causal structure.

Keywords

Causality; correction; genetics

The authors regret that the coding of the attitude items in the manuscript ‘Using genetic information to test causal relationships in cross-sectional data’ was exactly reversed. The codebook that we were working from for the original paper was the opposite of the actual coding of the raw variables. The purpose of the paper was to

Corresponding author:

Brad Verhulst, Virginia Commonwealth University, 800 East Leigh Street, Biotech I, Richmond, VA 23219-1534, USA.

Email: brad.verhulst@gmail.com

present an empirical model for testing causal hypotheses using cross-sectional twin data. The data were used to present readers with an example of how to use the method. Accordingly, the impact of the coding error on the conclusions is minimal. Of course, this has the potential to cause confusion for individuals who are focused on the sign of the relationship between personality and sex attitudes and not on the causal structure.

The two sections in the paper that are affected are presented below:

The regression parameters show a moderate regression of Sex Attitudes on Psychoticism in the positive direction (Raw Est. = 0.456, Std. Est. = 0.376), and a larger negative regression coefficient when Psychoticism is regressed on Sex Attitudes (Raw Est. = -0.449, Std. Est. = -0.545). When taken together, they denote a negative association between Psychoticism and Sex Attitudes such that more conservative Sex Attitudes drive higher levels of Psychoticism, represented by a model-implied correlation between these two constructs of -0.212. This effect is suppressed by a smaller effect of Psychoticism driving Sex Attitudes in the opposite direction (p. 339, paragraph 2).

Specifically, more conservative Sex Attitudes drive higher levels of Psychoticism, while this effect is suppressed by a smaller effect of Psychoticism driving Sex Attitudes in the opposite direction (p. 340, first paragraph in the Discussion section).

For individuals interested in the method, which is the focus of the paper, the direction of the relationship is immaterial. For individuals interested in the traits, but not the method, the conclusion that should be drawn from this paper is that more liberal Sex Attitudes drive higher levels of Psychoticism, which is suppressed by a smaller effect of Psychoticism driving Sex Attitudes in the opposite direction.

None of the algebra or theoretical components of the Direction of Causation Model were affected by the data coding error.

We would like to thank the *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, and Dr Ludeke and Dr Rasmussen for bringing the possibility of a coding error to our attention, which led us to the codebook error.

The authors would like to apologize for any inconvenience caused.