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Common social cognitive impairments do not mean common causes: A commentary on Cotter et al. (2018)

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Author Note: We confirm that this commentary has not been submitted elsewhere and there are no plans to submit a similar commentary elsewhere during review.

Abstract

Many clinical conditions, ranging from psychiatric to neurodegenerative illnesses, are associated with impairment in the processes by which we perceive, interpret, and respond to social information; a suite of abilities known as social cognition. Through a systematic review of meta-analyses, Cotter et al. (2018) present a compelling view of social cognitive deficits as a core phenotype of many clinical conditions. However, we caution against one potential interpretation of their findings, namely, that similar social cognitive outcomes are produced by similar causes. Specifically, we argue that while the outcome may look similar across clinical conditions (i.e.,

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