

# Mood and social influence: the role of metacognitive ability

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## Abstract

Others not only influence our behavior, but also our metacognitive evaluations of those behavior (i.e. decision confidence), even when feedback is random and uninformative. Here we ask if metacognitive ability to monitor reliability of one's decisions predicts social susceptibility. We also ask if mood (anxiety and depression) further modulates this effect. We gave 46 healthy participants a perceptual task and presented them with random social feedback (positive, negative, neutral). Participants rated their confidence in their decisions before and after feedback, and lastly had an opportunity to change their initial decisions. In a separate task we also measured their metacognitive abilities, as well as their anxiety and depression scores. Results showed metacognitive ability to increase susceptibility to random social feedback. Surprisingly for those with high levels of metacognitive ability anxiety exacerbates this effect, whereas depression suppresses it.