

Questionable Ethics Statements on 5 Articles by ZHAO Mei et. al.

Five articles [1-5] coauthored by ZHAO Mei (赵媚) with the Institute of Psychology, Chinese Academy of Sciences, share the same ethical approval, which was granted on Nov.10th, 2023 with the grant number of H23128. However, this ethical approval is questionable.

DOI	Authors	Title	Participants	Ethical Approval
10.3390/bs15020203	Qiulan Gu   Mei Zhao (赵媚)	The Chain Mediating Effects of Parent-Child Conflict and Screen Time on the Relationship Between Parental Phubbing and Problem Behaviors in Preschoolers	Electronic questionnaires were administered using a convenience sampling methodology through the "Wenjuanxing" online survey platform during the period of June to August 2023. Distribution channels included WeChat groups and social media networks (WeChat Moments), targeting parents with preschool-aged children (3-7 years).	This study received approval from the Ethics Committee of the Institute of Psychology, Chinese Academy of Sciences, adhering to ethical principles. The ethics approval number is H23128.
10.3390/bs15050654	Chong Ma   Mei Zhao (赵媚)   Yuqing Zhang	How Does Nature Connectedness Improve Mental Health in College Students? A Study of Chain Mediating Effects	An online survey was administered in April 2024 targeting college students enrolled at seven universities in Shandong, Tianjin, Guangdong, Hebei, Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region, Jiangsu, and Hunan, China.	Ethical approval for this study was granted by the Ethics Committee of the Institute of Psychology, Chinese Academy of Sciences (Approval No: H23128; Date: 10 November 2023).
10.32604/ijmh.2025.062796	Qiulan Gu   Mei Zhao (赵媚)	The Relationship between Parental Phubbing and Problem Behaviors in Preschool Children	This research utilized a convenience sampling method, targeting parents of kids in the preschool period (3-7 years old), with data collection conducted through the "Wenjuanxing" platform between June and August 2023.	This study was approved by the Ethics Committee of the Institute of Psychology, Chinese Academy of Sciences, and adheres to ethical principles (Approval No. H23128), and informed consent was obtained from all participants.
10.1038/s41598-025-08900-8	Ping Gao   Yuqing Zhang   Mei Zhao (赵媚)	Psychosocial health's impact on non-suicidal self-injury of college students	This study employs a mixed design with quantitative pretests and tracing post-tests involving 1193 college students majoring in preschool and primary education. The participants are first-year (freshmen) and second-year students (sophomore), primarily women, at a higher vocational college in Shaanxi.	This work was conducted in accordance with the principles of the Declaration of Helsinki and ethics approval (Nov.10th,2023/grant no. H23128) was obtained from the Ethics Committee of the Institute of Psychology, Chinese Academy of Sciences. The effect and mechanism of meditation intervention on teachers, parents and adolescents' mental health.
10.3390/bs14060444	Hui Yu   Zhanbiao Shi   Mei Zhao (赵媚)	The Relationship between Metacognition, Rumination, and Sleep in University Students with a Tendency toward Generalized Anxiety Disorder	To investigate the interplay among metacognition, rumination, and sleep patterns in individuals prone to generalized anxiety disorder, an online survey targeting freshmen at Anyang Normal University was conducted. In October 2023, questionnaires were distributed, and subsequently, 8000 responses were collected.	The study was approved by the Institutional Review Board of the Institute of Psychology, Chinese Academy of Sciences (H23128, 10 November 2023).

(1) Ethical should be case-specific, however, four distinguish participant cohorts were described across these five articles.

(2) Two of these four participant cohorts [1, 5] were recruited prior to the ethical approval date, which was sated as Nov.10th, 2023.

Concerns are raised not only regarding the authors' violation on the ethics management regulations, but also regarding to flawed peer review process, in which such issues should have been identified.

- [1] 10.3390/bs15020203
- [2] 10.3390/bs15050654
- [3] 10.32604/ijmh.2025.062796
- [4] 10.1038/s41598-025-08900-8
- [5] 10.3390/bs14060444

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