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Handedness and Creativity: Facts and Fictions

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Abstract

Are left handers more creative than right handers? In both popular belief and scientific literature, left-handedness is linked with higher creativity. Here, we evaluate whether left handers are better at divergent thinking, and whether left handers are overrepresented in creative professions, in a qualitative review supported by meta-analysis. We argue that plausible mechanisms for a creativity-handedness link can be found within influential theories of the neural basis of creativity. However, our meta-analysis does not find evidence that left or mixed handers are better at divergent thinking; in fact, right handers score slightly higher on the Alternate Uses Test. Additionally, we conclude that while left and mixed handers may be overrepresented in Art and Music, they are underrepresented in creative professions in general. We find that although both right and left handers tend to believe that left handers are more creative, this belief is not supported by the available empirical evidence.