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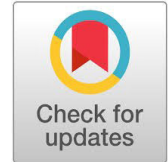
An Analysis of Unhappiness and Happiness in the 21st Century: A Case Study of Bertrand Russell's The Conquest of Happiness

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ABSTRACT

This research exhibits the major and different causes and conditions of people's Unhappiness and Happiness in the light of Bertrand Russell's views regarding the same topic as expressed by him in his book *The Conquest of Happiness*. Firstly, the causes which ultimately lead people towards Unhappiness as researched by different researchers are propounded and then their analysis is done through Bertrand Russell's book. Secondly, the same is done for the causes of Happiness. The existing literature highlights on happiness and unhappiness. This study is an addition to the existing literature how people and their life is seen in twenty-first century. Besides, the cause and effect is analyzed through given research questions regarding theory of happiness and unhappiness. This Research is conducted through qualitative method using textual analysis based on in-depth reading of the original text from the book.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Monk (2022) asserts that Bertrand Arthur William Russell was born on May 18, 1872, at Trelleck, Monmouth shire. He was a philosopher, logician, essayist, and social reformer, he bested in the field of Mathematics, logic, and analytic philosophy. He was the 3rd earl of Russell. He died on February 2, 1970, in Wales. He was 97 when on his deathbed.

"This book is not addressed to the learned, or to those who regard a practical problem merely as something to be talked about... All that I claim for the recipes offered to the reader is

that they are such as are confirmed by my own experience and observation" (Russell, 1930).

As the above-mentioned lines from the preface of the actual book represents that this book is solely based on Russell's own experience with Unhappiness and ways of finding Happiness. In his book Russell flinches by telling about the causes of why people are unhappy in their lives in today's modern world, then after discussing and explaining at length the reasons for unhappiness, Russell moves to carve a path out of his own experience with life about certain ways to achieve happiness in even modern day. Liveright (2013.) complements that this book is written in a plaintive style as everyone may understand Russell's point by using common sense, and everything written is suggestive of Russell's rational approach toward things. He has intentionally penned all causes of unhappiness and ways of finding happiness in an extremely rational manner, so as to whoever wishes to get out of the tunnel of unhappiness and wants to see the light of happiness may find it at the end.

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Rationale of the study

The research on the causes of Unhappiness and Happiness has been conducted many from time to time by different researchers and many philosophers have given their own opinion about the causes. Rigg (2022) is view of that in the first century happiness depends on the required needs in one's life. Sherman (2014) asserts that money is the solution of happiness. Easterlin (2004) engraves in his research about Happiness that most of today's people will be satisfied if they are told that their income will remain constant along with their colleagues' income, but those same people would be dissatisfied when told that their income would increase once and then their colleagues' income would increase annually, but less than theirs, still the people would be dissatisfied because of the comparison factor. Rhode Walt (2022) asserts that the greediness in people is causing unhappiness. Similarly, this study carries the solution of happiness and reflects causes of unhappiness in the twenty first century. What distinguishes this research is that it is in context to the 21st century world and also it is analyzed under the case study of Bertrand Russell's book *The Conquest of Happiness*?

Research Questions

Q:1 What are the different causes provoking Unhappiness in the 21st century's life as analyzed by Bertrand Russell in *The Conquest of Happiness*?

Q:2 What is the analysis of Bertrand Russell as done in *The Conquest of Happiness* about the causes of Happiness in the 21st century?

Research Objectives

- To explore the various causes of Unhappiness in the 21st century.
- It will also analyze that how people can still attain Happiness in the 21st century.

Literary Theory

In this study, two theories related to Unhappiness and Happiness which are also relevant to this research article.

Westphal (2023) asserts the theory of unhappiness given by Soren Kierkegaard, and another theory of happiness specified by Jean Jacques Rousseau. Similarly, Russell's book *The Conquest of Happiness* reflects the common causes for Happiness and unhappiness in the 21st century. Also, this study is examined through the theory of unhappiness and theory of happiness (See Analysis).

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

There are different books, articles and views are written from time to time on happiness and unhappiness. Literature review brings different view on the existing literature to enrich readers time to time.

Unhappiness in the 21st Century

Unhappiness has become a part of today's modern-

day world, the utmost reason for it is today's materialism. The world has become a factory, producing human robots by the hour. Russell (1930) exemplifies the situation of bustling New York street where everyone is just moving mechanically towards their destinations and no one has time to look elsewhere. While the same people on a weekend get together at a bar or hotel and get intoxicated, they think that getting intoxicated may lighten their burden, but it only brings out their unconscious self which only knows to take pity on their ruined and mechanical life. Hence, they get even more miserable and unhappy. He also gives the four most common causes and problems researched about Unhappiness in the 21st Century are now to be discussed.

Depression and Competition

Iyer K (2012) asserts that Depression has become the second largest cause of unhappiness in modern time. Researchers have found that depression is a by-product of overwork, and consequently, overwork is the result of competition. At school the students face so much competition from their peers that they start spending all day studying and doing nothing else, this makes their life blank and dull, they start thinking a lot about their future and ultimately get depressed. At the office, the same thing repeats, the only difference is that the person is now getting more and more serious. Because, now if he falls back in the competition, his career would become insecure, and his desire of becoming rich would be thwarted. Finally, the depression of self, other forms of depression have been found to be only physically and mentally harmful, but this form of depression attacks you spiritually as well.

Intoxication

Rigg (2022) writes about the people in today's world, especially in western culture, have normalized the usage of alcohol, which if kept in bounds has been found to be fine or even in some instances good. But, excessive drinking is surely a serious matter, not only it disturbs health, but it also becomes a hurdle in achieving true Happiness and becomes a culprit for Unhappiness. Intoxication could potentially lead to domestic violence, fatigue, irrational decision making, and becoming over-sentimental.

Envy and Discontent

Sabater (2022) also avers further that this goes to show that even if a person is rich and is spending a luxurious life he still will be discontent with all he has, the hunger for having more can never be satisfied until and unless one starts to only look towards his own Happiness. This Envy and discontent in everything keep a person awake all night, murdering even a happy sleep.

Happiness in the 21st Century

Gervais (2019) marks Happiness in two forms; one is of the heart, and the other is of the head. He says that the Happiness of the heart is attainable by all and the Happiness of the head is attainable by the educated. Further, he asserts and gives an example of a layman who finds happiness in his menial work because he is free from

any other commitments and is happy in his life.

Family

When it comes to family, Iyer K (2012) talks about the matter from the perspective of children and of the parent as well. Hasan (2016) asserts that for a child it is the affection of his family that makes him Happy. Not only does that affection make him happy, but it also makes him confident and provides him with a sense of security. That child, when he gets proper affection becomes adventurous and is ready to fully explore the world because he is confident that his family has got his back and ultimately finds his Happiness

No Excessive Expectations

It is easy in today's world to think of yourself to be superior to all, or at least wanting to be superior to all. Russell (1930) suggests to always being less expectant, the reason he gives is that if you will expect that you can achieve anything and then if you do not achieve it, you will only get heartbroken, but if you are only trying your best and are not expecting much, then you may get a surprise of success and that surprise will make you utterly Happy. The same goes for money as well, Sherman (2014) asserts that having enough money is always good and makes you Happy, but having it in excess never serves the purpose of giving you Happiness, rather it will only leave you craving for more wealth.

Socializing

Socializing has become a part of today's world, but that is only digital. Sherman (2014) observes that even though the world has become an interconnected family of thousands because of social media platforms, we are still disconnected from each other, personally and spiritually. Sherman (2014) further claims that the thousands of friends which we have on different social media platforms are not real friends, as they are only there on the net. That is why he asserts that socializing on social media gives you fake or temporary happiness, so to get real happiness one must keep up with physical socializing like dinners, meet-ups, and parties. Sherman (2014) backs his point by referring to the fact that human beings are social animals who always crave attention and the need to socialize that is why he suggests that physical socializing must be kept up with from time to time, in order to stay Happy in today's fast-moving world.

Stop Comparison

Easterlin (2004) engraves in his research about Happiness that most of today's people will be satisfied if they are told that their income will remain constant along with their colleagues' income, but those same people would be dissatisfied when told that their income would increase once and then their colleagues' income would increase annually, but less than theirs, still the people would be dissatisfied because of the comparison factor. Easterlin (2004) also writes that people when asked a question that would they prefer a job that will give them more, but would allow them less family time, the majority of people unanimously agreed to the job, prioritizing

the money over their family. Finally, Easterlin (2004) correspondingly concludes that it is the comparison factor that must be stopped in order to achieve true Happiness because according to him people remain happy until they start comparing their materialistic needs with others.

3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

In this study, qualitative method is applied to carry the study ahead. Here two tools of qualitative study are used to enrich the study to bring the causes of happiness and unhappiness in twenty first century.

This is a Non-Empirical study based on qualitative research. Dan (2017) adds that non-empirical study focuses on the personal observance through the read articles and books.

The data is collected through textual analysis. Textual analysis is done by reading the text and analyzing it. As Hawkins(2017) asserts that textual analysis is a methodology where the text is read and then interpreted as to how the people are making sense out of the text to understand life. Denzin and Lincoln (2011) opines that textual analysis and close reading of the text allows the researcher to collect and analyze data accordingly to the requisition. Similarly, this research's data is collected through first-hand reading of the original text and then the deep analysis of the selected textual lines related to the research topic i.e., An Analysis of Unhappiness and Happiness in the 21st Century: A case study of Bertrand Russell's The conquest of Happiness from the original text i.e., Bertrand Russell's The Conquest of Happiness and then finally interpreting them.

Apart from the first-hand reading of the original text, the other resources through which data has been collected are multiple articles and blogs of various authors related to the research topic. With the help of two research questions and objectives this study is analyzes to know the various causes of happiness and unhappiness in twenty first century. Similarly, Bertrand Russell's the Conquest of happiness is selected to bring solution for modern people how to live well and to make happy others in modern times.

Research Analysis:

An Analysis of Unhappiness and Happiness in the 21st Century: A case study of Bertrand Russell's The Conquest of Happiness

The analysis part is divided into two parts: in the first part Researcher analyses and discusses the causes of Unhappiness and in the second he discusses the causes of Happiness. There are seventeen chapters in all from which 10 chapters are selected for analysis.

Causes of Unhappiness by Bertrand Russell

What Makes People Unhappy?

Everyone in this 21st century world is busy in their lives and does not have any time for their own happiness. Similarly, Russell (1930) puts his experiences forth and give

his reasons for this Unhappiness. The first reason stated is that their business, everyone is so much busy and drowned in their daily life that they are unable to take out time for their own selves. Rigg (2022) asserts that intoxication plays a very vital role in people's being Unhappy as it sprouts many more vices and makes you guilty. Similarly, Russell (1930) in his first chapter writes that when on weekends people do get some time they get intoxicated and become self-absorbed afterwards and drown in their own guilt and this guilt only awakens their unconscious self and makes them more miserable and makes them to realize their own lowliness and failures.

According to Russell (1930) self-absorption is key point in making people unhappy, when people are so much self-absorbed they only think about themselves which snatches their true happiness. There are three types of self-absorbed peoples according to Russell (1930); The Sinner, The Narcissist, The Megalomaniac.

By the Sinner it is not meant a person who commits sin, rather it is about a person who is self-absorbed in his sins, who is well aware of his sins and is religiously afraid of committing sins, he knows that drinking, lying, corruption, abusing, having sex all are sins, but he has still committed them and most probably would continue to do so as they all have become part of today's world. Now, this matter that neither could he abstain himself from these nor could he avoid them puts him in constant guilt and this guilt evokes despair and Unhappiness in him.

As for the Narcissist, Rhodewalt (2022) asserts that they are appreciation-greedy, meaning they only want to hear their own appreciation all the time. Also, they only love their own selves, in work, whatever work they do, they consider it the best work ever done. Similarly, Russell (1930) finds that this appreciation-greediness leads to Unhappiness as they only love themselves and neglect the feelings and love of all others, this negligence of others' love leaves them alone in the end. As for the matter of their work they do not do it with their heart, rather, they only do it for the appreciation which they crave.

A Megalomaniac on the other hand is power-greedy, asserts Barkley (2022). They are always wanting more and more power and want everyone to be feared by them and be controlled by them. The reason Barkley (2022) finds for their such behavior is inferiority complex, they are afraid to lose their power and to become inferior to others. Similarly, Russell (1930) asserts that these Megalomaniacs only wish to have more and more power and want to control all around them, he gives the example of Alexander the Great who was a megalomaniac, he was outwardly happy and achieved his dreams, but was never able to achieve all his dreams because his hunger for his dreams kept growing. As for the inferiority complex Russell (1930) again takes the example from the past of Napoleon, he says that Napoleon was mistreated at school and became a megalomaniac in his youth and enjoyed power.

Byronic Unhappiness

Many people today believe that they have gained all the wisdom of the world and have procured all the wealth and

pleasures of this world then they start becoming pessimist and starts considering that there is nothing for them to do in this world, this leads towards their Unhappiness. Cigelske (2018) also adds that the people who thinks that they have all the wisdom of the world and now they do not have much purpose in life, they become quite fed up from life and become pessimistic. Similarly, Russell (1930) writes that people having more wisdom than others think of their lives as futile and so becomes quite unhappy with their lives. Yet, they do this with proud and considers their rational Unhappiness to be much better than having Happiness and no wisdom, this he calls the Byronic Unhappiness. Russell (1930) asserts that this is so because of their feeling of vanity that everything is meaningless and is in vain. But, that is because they are having pleasures of life without any effort, the feeling of vanity only comes when you do not have anything to do or when you achieve things on a silver platter. As he writes:

"The mere absence of effort from his life removes an essential ingredient of happiness." (Russell, 1930: 20).

People usually feel vanity when they lose the value of achieving things with effort, if they start achieving things with effort, they will again start feeling the need of coming back to life and will find meaning in life. As for pessimism and vanity of people there are two more points in Ecclesiastes which Russell (1930) refutes, those points are:

"There is no new thing under the sun.

I hated all my labor which I had taken under the sun; because I should leave it unto the man that shall be after me." (Ecclesiastes)

Competition

Competition in all aspects of life is good until some extent, but if it surpasses the limit then it only becomes a burden on our Happiness and so is the case of the 21st century world. People become so busy in competition of getting ahead of their peers that they eventually cross the line between success and Unhappiness. Williamson (2015) avers that people at workplaces and in businesses have become so over-competitive that it has become more harmful than it is productive. Similarly, Russell (1930) asserts that an elite businessman is so confined to gaining more wealth and getting ahead of his peers that even though he has that much money that he can spent the rest of his life easily, he would still thrive for more just because of competition, as Russell writes for businessman:

"The businessman's religion and glory demand that he should make much money." (Russell, 1930: 32).

Haque (2018) states in his article that GDP has become the lens with which the world now sees each other. Similarly, Russell (1930) asserts that people only weigh each other on the basis of money and financial status of business. He further elaborates the fact that people usually strive to compete because they want that whatever difficulties they have born, their children may not bear them, but this is only fine till the extent of the poor generations, when a generation is well established and has enough for its future generation then this competition should relent.

This, however continues because people have made this the so-called way of achieving Happiness as Russell notices in these lines:

"The root of the trouble springs from too much emphasis upon competitive success as the main source of happiness." (Russell, 1930: 33).

The Sense of Sin

We all have been being instilled with the different concepts of sin, since our childhood. We have been taught that if you do this or do that it will be returned to you in the form of punishment for your sin. But, are those concepts of sin really rational and true? Parents usually neglect the greater sins and only preach about the traditional sins like, lying, drinking, smoking and sex. Similarly, Russell (1930) holds that children are taught by their parents that abusing, drinking and sex all are sins and must be avoided, these concepts are so much forcefully taught that these affect the children in their adult life and become a hurdle to their living a life of their own choice. It is human nature that they do not want to commit sin, but they still commit sin either intentionally or unintentionally and afterwards drown in their own guilt and make their lives miserable and unhappy. Paul the apostle writes in the Romans about this very point:

"For I know that good itself does not dwell in me, that is, in my sinful nature. For I have the desire to do what is good, but I cannot carry it out. For I do not do the good I want to do, but the evil I do not want to do—this I keep on doing." (Romans 7: 18-19).

Fear of Public Opinion

Human beings are social animals and we want admiration and almost always approval of others as well. People care for others' opinion about their lives and choices more than they care for their own choices, sometimes those others are our relatives and sometime our neighbors. This makes our life more impersonal as if we are living for others and not for our own selves, and nobody can live happily with this sort of life.

Gervais (2019) enhances that the youth loses its belief, values and most importantly its potential because of the fear of what others might say, and it starts to go in the reserved phase. Similarly, Russell (1930) holds that the meritorious youth which has good potential faces much Unhappiness because of others' opinion about their choices, believes, values and career, as he writes:

"To most young men and women of exceptional merit adolescence is a time of great unhappiness." (Russell, 1930: 83).

Our relatives especially our parents interfere a lot in the choices we make, this is good to some age, but when a child reaches the mature age he/she must be given the freedom to their own choices. Same goes for the parents as well, sometimes the children try to make choices for their parents which is unnecessary and may prove to be not so good for the parents' happiness.

Causes of Happiness by Bertrand Russell

Is Happiness Still Possible?

The attainment of Happiness depends on the will and desire to be happy. People may become happy even from very menial tasks if they want to and some may get happiness by doing some extravagant work. Similarly, Russell (1930) has explored the different ways people attain happiness. He divides happiness in two categories one that is of the heart and other of the head. The happiness of the heart is attainable by everyone and can be attained from menial work if done with contentment, like when you even help anyone, you get satisfaction and happiness. Other is of the head which the educated people get by achieving success in their work.

Einstein in 1922 wrote about happiness that a modest life can bring more happiness to someone than one stuck in the pursuit of success. Likewise, Russell (1930) holds that the people who lead a modest life and does not have over-confidence on themselves find more happiness because they do not get surprised by failure, rather they get surprised by their success when they achieve it and become happier, he expresses this idea as:

Fischer (2019) states that to attain happiness one must follow his/her own instinct and let yourself be free of any bounds. In this regard, Russell (1930) also adds that one must keep his/her interests boundless and should keep a positive and friendly attitude towards the people and things. He expresses his view of the secret of happiness in the lines:

"Let your interests be as wide as possible, and let your reactions to the things and persons that interest you be as far as possible friendly rather than hostile." (Russell, 1930: 101)

Affection

Sabater (2022) carves that a child needs to be loved and must feel safe and accompanied, also that it is the childhood affection that shapes his/her future. Legg (2020) also stresses that some parents go so far in their affection that they enter in the bounds of over-protection, this over-protection from different things will only make the children timid and less adventurous. Russell (1930) also holds and warns from such an affection, that if a parent, especially a mother, is over-protective of her children then the child would only come to feel that he/she is only secure when he/she is close to the mother, this will snatch all the joys of childhood, as childhood happiness is all about adventure.

Affection does not only play vital role in childhood, rather it is also very crucial tool of a happy married life as well, where the affection is not only to be received, but also to be given. In married life, both partners must share the affection equally, meaning they both should equally give and receive affection in order to live happily. On this Russell (1930) adds:

"The best type of affection is reciprocally life-giving; each receives affection with joy and gives it without effort, and each finds the whole world more interesting in consequence of the existence of this reciprocal happiness." (Russell, 1930: 117).

The Family

The thing that comes to mind directly after hearing the word 'Family' is parenthood or parents. In today's world the most exuberant experience is becoming a parent. Neuberger and Preisner (2018) find in their research that having children to look up to for care is a great cause of happiness for people in their old age. On this account Russell (1930) adds:

"To be happy in this world, especially when youth is past, it is necessary to feel oneself not merely an isolated individual whose day will soon be over, but part of the stream of life flowing on from the first germ to the remote and unknown future." (Russell, 1930: 127).

Surely, having someone to look up to in old age for care is a cause of happiness, also this provides you with the sense that you will not leave this world without a mark and that whatever you made in this world will not go to waste, as Abraham was also optimistic for his seed to get the promised land.

Russell (1930) concludes the two factors of pleasure and happiness from family – parenthood – as:

"On the one hand there is the feeling of part of one's own body externalized, prolonging its life beyond death... On the other hand, there is an intimate blend of power and tenderness. The new creature is helpless, and there is an impulse to supply its needs." (Russell, 1930: 129).

By this he asserts that having family – Children – is an assurance that whatever one has sown in his lifetime will be continued and reaped by his own blood. Secondly, family keeps one motivated and determined to stay strong and keep working, this determination when bears fruit gives immense satisfaction and happiness to the family head.

Work

In today's bustling world everyone is busy in their work, this work can either be a source of Happiness or Unhappiness. If the work is tiresome it might cause Unhappiness, but if it is leisurely done and is done to kill time it becomes a source of Happiness. As Russell (1930) writes:

"Work, therefore, is desirable, first and foremost, as a preventive of boredom," (Russell, 1930: 134).

Another main reason of getting Happiness out of work is very understandable and common. Fischer (2010) states in her research paper that people find Happiness in work for Hedonistic purposes, meaning they get Happiness because their work provides them pleasure and money.

Fischer (2010) proclaims that one must have satisfaction of his/her work at the workplace and this can be achieved by selecting the appropriate job as per your skill. Similarly, Russell (1930) points out two satisfactions of work; one is from skill, another is from its construction. For skill he states that one should only do that work in which he/she is skilled so that he/she will keep growing in that skill and that craving for growth will give more pleasure, as he writes in these lines:

"All skilled work can be pleasurable, provided the skill required is either variable or capable of indefinite improvement." (Russell, 1930: 136).

The Happy Man

Uusiautti and Määttä (2013) writes in their research paper about the importance of love that how love and affection both play an important role for a person to be Happy. In this regard, Russell (1930) holds about affection that the man who is the recipient of affection is a Happy man, but he also warns that one must also give affection in order to receive it, yet the giving must not be like a barter in which you expect the affection to be returned as you gave, the affection given must be solely from heart. In his words Russell (1930) about affection writes:

"It is useless to attempt to give it as a calculation, in the way in which one might lend money at interest, for a calculated affection is not genuine and is not felt to be so by the recipient." (Russell, 1930: 156).

This world has become a bustling port, where each day people arrive and depart, some Unhappily and some Happily. But, all are very distant with each other. The Happy man is that who connects himself with the world and considers himself a part of this universe, and this will be done when one finds outward interests and love others, because then he will find a purpose to keep going and will find Happiness along the way. Russell (1930) also adds on this point and winds up his book by writing:

"As soon as we have genuine interest in persons or things outside ourselves. Through such interests a man comes to feel himself part of the stream of life, and it is in such profound union with the stream of life that the greatest joy is to be found." (Russell, 1930: 159).

4. CONCLUSION

Now that the in-depth analysis of the book and its chapters is done, the conclusion can easily be driven. The two questions which were set to be answered will now be answered. First in the causes of Unhappiness Russell (1930) propounds Self-absorption and remarks that it is because of this that people only indulge in their own selves and makes their lives devoid of other pleasures. Then, he gives the concept of Byronic Unhappiness and says that the people having too much knowledge think that they know all and that now nothing is new for them and consequently become bored of this world. Thirdly, he points out the ongoing competition of accumulation wealth and recognition because of which people do not even spend time with their families and are only working without any real pleasure. On the fourth note he notices the sense of sin which exists in everyone to be another cause as well, as he considers that either the people should not commit sin in the first place, but if a sin is committed then the person should not over-divulge in the guilt of his sin, otherwise it will lead to Unhappiness. Finally, he writes about the fear of public opinion, as most people think what others might think about them and in this they lose the freedom to their own lives and start living for others' appreciation. These five

points are the major causes which provoke Unhappiness.

As for the second question and the causes of Happiness Russell (1930) says that happiness differs for all some might attain it through menial work, other may attain it by doing something marvelous. Another point he talks about is modesty in one's own powers, meaning that he suggests that people should not be too much over-confident about their success and power. Secondly, he finds affection and family to be a major cause of Happiness for people, as people crave for affection and this affection in turn gives them immense pleasure. As for family, it surely is a cause of Happiness, as it is family which drives a man of 21st century to keep moving ahead and to live a happy life. Thirdly, he finds work to also be a cause of Happiness, this he considers in the sense that the work must be of one's own choice and when he does the work of his/her dreams it gives pleasure and its success makes that person and very proud and happy man.

All in all, it can be concluded that Happiness in the 21st century is very much attainable, it all depends on a person's lifestyle and his choices. The above conclusion also satisfies the questions set to be answered and completes its objectives.

Conflict interests

The authors has declared that no competing interests exist.

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