Twitter Thread by ■James Heathers■



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Thesis: 'methodological crisis' in science is NOT the sudden realisation of a problem. It is a well characterised problem which benefited hugely in recognition by a change in how scientists communicate and collaborate. Central issues were outlined clearly before 1970.

Sterling, 1959. Publication bias, the file drawer problem, and the cult of significance.

Cohen, 1962. Social scientific studies are, in general, substantially underpowered.

Forscher, 1963. The pursuit of publication rather than the pursuit of reliable results.

Platt, 1964. Topic-hopping, weak theory, and the role of induction over time.

Meehl, 1967. The role of the 'cute', surprising, or counter-intuitive results as an eventual outcome for capitalizing on chance.

Lykken, 1968. The weakness of statistical significance in isolation, the need for replication, the central importance of methods, and a whole lot more.

Does all of the above form a coherent body of work that people read at the time? No idea. Probably not.

But - these papers do address, straightforwardly and in better prose than we're allowed to write now, the heart of issues that a lot of people feel blindsided by at present.

And they were written half a century ago.

Big props to @BrentWRoberts and @profsimons (and presumably other @improvingpsych people) for mugging up a list of papers on this topic that helped me fill the fairly substantial gaps in my knowledge on this.