

# NEW POLL SHOWS CORRELATION IS CAUSATION

WASHINGTON (AP) The results of a new survey conducted by pollsters suggest that, contrary to common scientific wisdom, correlation does in fact imply causation. The highly reputable source, Gallup Polls, Inc., surveyed 1009 Americans during the month of October and asked them, "Do you believe correlation implies causation?" An overwhelming 64% of American's answered "YES", while only 38% replied "NO". Another 8% were undecided. This result threatens to shake the foundations of both the scientific and mainstream community.

"It is really a mandate from the people." commented one pundit who wished to remain anonymous. "It says that The American People are sick and tired of the scientific mumbo-jumbo that they keep trying to shove down our throats, and want some clear rules about what to believe. Now that correlation implies causation, not only is everything easier to understand, it also shows that even Science must answer to the will of John and Jane Q. Public."

Others are excited because this new, important result actually gives insight into why the result occurred in the first place. "If you look at the numbers over the past two decades, you can see that Americans have been placing less and less faith in the old maxim 'Correlation is not Causation' as time progresses." explained pollster and pop media icon

Sarah Purcell. "Now, with the results of the latest poll, we are able to determine that people's lack of belief in correlation not being causal has caused correlation to now become causal. It is a real advance in the field of meta-epistemology."

This major philosophical advance is, surprisingly, looked on with skepticism amongst the theological community. Rabbi Marvin Pachino feels that the new finding will not affect the plight of theists around the world. "You see, those who hold a deep religious belief have a thing called faith, and with faith all things are possible. We still fervently believe, albeit contrary to strong evidence, that correlation does not imply causation. Our steadfast and determined faith has guided us through thousands of years of trials and tribulations, and so we will weather this storm and survive, as we have survived before."

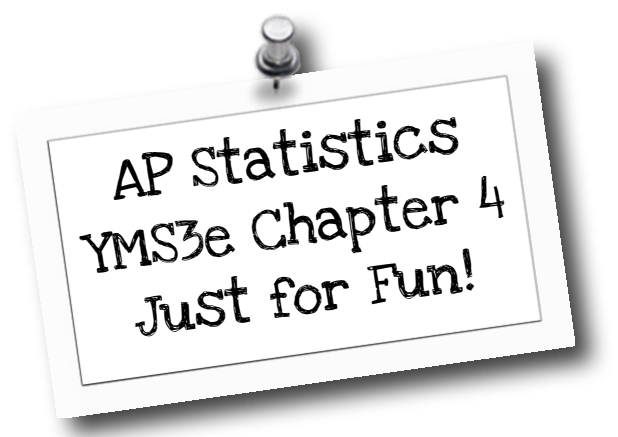
Joining the theologians in their skepticism are the philosophers. "It's really the chicken and the egg problem. Back when we had to worry about causation, we could debate which came first. Now that correlation IS causation, I'm pretty much out of work." philosopher-king Jesse "The Mind" Ventura told reporters. "I've spent the last fifteen years in a heated philosophical debate about epistemics, and then all of the sudden Gallup comes along and says, "Average household consumption of peanut butter is up, people prefer red to blue, and...by the way, CORRELATION IS CAUSATION. Do you know what this means? This means that

good looks actually make you smarter! This means that Katie Couric makes the sun come up in the morning! This means that Bill Gates was right and the Y2K bug is Gregory's fault." Ventura was referring to Pope Gregory XIII, the 16<sup>th</sup> century pontiff who introduced the "Gregorian Calendar" we use today, and who we now know is to blame for the year 2000.

The scientific community is deeply divided on this matter. "It sure makes my job a lot easier." confided neuroscientist Thad Polk. "Those who criticize my work always point out that, although highly correlated, cerebral blood flow is not 'thought'. Now that we know correlation IS causal, I can solve that pesky mind-body problem and conclude that thinking is merely the dynamic movement of blood within cerebral tissue. This is going to make getting tenure a piece of cake!"

Anti-correlationist Travis Seymour is more cynical. "What about all the previous correlational results? Do they get grandfathered in? Like, the old stock market/hemline Pearson's rho is about 0.85. Does this mean dress lengths actually dictated the stock market, even though they did it at a time when correlation did not imply causation? And what about negative and marginally significant correlations? These questions must be answered before the scientific community will accept the results of the poll wholeheartedly. More research is definitely needed."

Whether one welcomes the news or sheds a tear at the loss of the ages-old maxim that hoped to eternally separate the highly correlated from the causal, one must admit that the new logic is here and it's here to stay. Here to stay, of course, until next October, when Gallup, Inc. plans on administering the poll again. But chances are, once Americans begin seeing the entrepreneurial and market opportunities associated with this major philosophical advance, there will be no returning to the darker age when causal relationships were much more difficult to detect.



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