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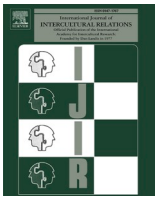

Brief report

Alliances for social change: Linking majority-group cultural adoption to collective action intentions

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ABSTRACT

Social inequalities persist in multicultural societies and addressing them requires the active engagement of advantaged group members as allies. Here, we investigated how the Spaniards' perceptions of Moroccans' morality and intergroup contact relate to their willingness to engage in collective action to support Moroccans' rights, examining in a novel way the role of majority-group cultural adoption. Spanish participants (n = 643) reported perceived morality, contact quantity and quality, willingness to adopt Moroccan cultural patterns, and intention to engage in collective action. Results showed that perceiving Moroccans as moral was linked to greater cultural adoption, more so than contact. In turn, cultural adoption was positively associated with collective action, revealing an indirect relation of perceived morality with collective action intentions via cultural adoption. These findings highlight the importance of perceived morality in the process of majority-group cultural adoption and the promotion of allyship for social change.

Cultural diversity remains a challenge facing contemporary societies, whereas ethnic minorities, especially immigrants, continue to suffer from prejudice and discrimination. The transformative potential that can improve the conditions of disadvantaged communities and reduce their discrimination should involve the majority society to increase its efficacy. Majority society has a key role in the struggle of groups who have less power in public decision-making (e.g., who cannot vote in elections). However, this is not an easy task as advantaged groups often have negative stereotypes of stigmatized communities and their culture, and justify the status quo (Jost & Banaji, 1994). Therefore, it is imperative to find new strategies that involve the majority society in the fight for equality by identifying key elements that could be linked to their engagement in collective action, going beyond the well-identified factors such as affective injustice (van Zomeren, 2013), collective efficacy (Urbiola et al., 2025), or moral convictions (Agostini & van Zomeren, 2021). Here, we argue that studying the willingness of advantaged group allies to engage in collective action should consider moral stereotypes that are key in shaping intergroup processes, and majority acculturation strategies, specifically, their cultural adoption.

The relevance of the moral domain in collective action has been widely shown. Moral convictions are crucial in what we believe, our ideals, and the causes we fight for, acting as a driving force for change (Agostini & van Zomeren, 2021). Meta-perceptions of morality also relate to collective action. When advantaged group members (i.e., Spaniards) are validated as moral, they are more willing to act collectively for immigrants' rights (Vázquez et al., 2022). In a similar vein, when men's morality is recognized, they are

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more likely to support women's rights (Vázquez et al., 2024). However, for members of advantaged groups, participating in collective action requires not only affirming their own group's morality but also evaluating the morality of the disadvantaged group.

Understanding others' intentions is crucial for navigating social life and ensuring group survival. Therefore, stereotypes of morality (i.e., one of the two subdimensions of warmth, together with sociability; Leach et al., 2007), indicate how trustworthy and sincere others appear and offer key insights into whether they represent a potential benefit or threat to ourselves or our group (Brambilla et al., 2011; Brambilla & Leach, 2014). As such, stereotypes of morality appear to be greatly associated with intergroup evaluations, both in first impressions and how we revise those impressions over time (Brambilla & Leach, 2014; Brambilla et al., 2012, 2019). Supporting this, Brambilla et al. (2013) found that Italian participants who viewed immigrants as moral were more likely to engage in collective action on their behalf, for instance, by voting for anti-discrimination parties or signing petitions in support of immigrant rights.

The relevance of morality over non moral characteristics in outgroup evaluations has been consistently demonstrated (e.g., Cuadrado et al., 2020; López-Rodríguez et al., 2013; López-Rodríguez & Zagefka, 2015; for a review see Brambilla et al., 2021), but it has been less compared to other potential correlates of social change such as contact (e.g., Allport, 1954; Binder et al., 2009; López-Rodríguez et al., 2017; Pettigrew & Tropp, 2008), which has been ambivalently related to collective action (mobilizing advantaged groups and sedating disadvantaged groups; Carmona-López et al., 2025; Cocco et al., 2024).

In the context of intercultural relations, perceived morality has also been related to acculturation processes. Previous experimental evidence showed that morality was the only dimension (vs. sociability and competence, but also vs. contact quantity) that influences majority members' preferences for minority cultural maintenance. That is, perceiving immigrants as moral was more strongly linked with the majority's preferences for the maintenance of their original culture (López-Rodríguez & Zagefka, 2015). The majority's perceptions of the acculturation of devalued immigrants are related to the evaluation of their morality (Maisonneuve et al., 2023). Accordingly, when Spaniards perceived Moroccans as low in morality, they preferred them to adopt the Spanish culture to a greater extent (Urbiola et al., 2021).

A good deal of work has considered the acculturation processes (i.e., cognitive, affective and behavioral changes from ongoing cross-cultural contact; Berry, 1980; Graves, 1967) of minority groups –especially immigrants– who may maintain their original culture and/or adopt the host culture to a greater or lesser extent (Berry, 1997; Bourhis et al., 1997), as well as to the perceptions and preferences of majority members about the minority-group' acculturation process (e.g., Navas et al., 2005). However, acculturation is a two-way process that involves changes in both groups in contact, minorities and majorities (e.g., Berry, 1997). In this regard, recent work has highlighted the importance of exploring the acculturation experienced by majority groups (Kunst et al., 2021; Zagefka et al., 2022).

Recent research shows that morality also appears to be associated with majority cultural adoption. Indeed, Kunst et al. (2025) showed that the perceived morality of immigrants was related to the majority group's willingness to adopt their cultural elements. Specifically, when participants perceived immigrants as moral (although also as warm and competent), they were seen as more indispensable to the country's identity and economy, which in turn was associated with the willingness to adopt their culture. In the Spanish context, Vázquez-Flores et al. (2023) also found that perceiving Moroccans as moral was related to Spaniards' willingness to adopt their cultural patterns.

Research addressing the link between acculturation and collective action remains scarce, with notable exceptions. Brylka et al. (2015) showed that when the majority group (i.e., Finns) perceived that Russian immigrants wished to maintain their culture more than the majority considered acceptable (i.e., cultural discordance), this perception was associated with a lower disposition to support collective action on their behalf. Moreover, other cultural aspects, such as diversity ideologies, have been positively linked to collective action (e.g., Deaux et al., 2006; Knab & Steffens, 2018). As a case in point, the AMIGAS (Achieving Multicultural Integration of Groups Across Society) model (Urbiola et al., 2022) argues that multicultural commitment is a key aspect in collective action aimed at establishing fair relations and supporting disadvantaged groups. Under this premise, we can expect that other cultural elements, such as the adoption of minority groups' cultural patterns, would be associated with the disposition of advantaged groups to participate in collective action aimed at reducing inequalities.

The present study

The present study is framed within broader theoretical frameworks of collective action, building upon their core assumptions and integrating innovative aspects. System Justification Theory posits that stereotypes about disadvantaged groups can function to legitimize and support the current status quo (Kay & Jost, 2003). From the Social Identity perspective, stereotypes can also indirectly serve to psychologically distance individuals from these groups (resulting in low identification) and to justify existing inequality or discrimination, which are crucial elements for mobilization within the SIMCA model (van Zomeren, 2013). Group identification can also be conditioned by diversity ideologies (Deaux et al., 2006). Specifically, adopting the cultural patterns of a minority group may indicate a stronger sense of identification with that community and, consequently, a greater readiness to engage in collective action on its behalf, given that multicultural aspects play a key role in motivating collective action (Urbiola et al., 2022). While the logic behind these arguments is consistent with prior theories, we propose the explicit consideration of important motivational factors, such as the stereotypes of morality, and the majority's adoption of the minority culture, as constructs that, by fostering the processes of identification with the disadvantaged group, may contribute to intentions of collective action on its behalf.

Previous literature shows that perceived stereotypes of morality are strongly and indirectly associated with prosocial behavior through majority preferences for minority culture maintenance, highlighting the potential mediating role of acculturation between morality and behavioral constructs (López-Rodríguez & Zagefka, 2015). However, to our knowledge, majority acculturation –particularly the adoption of cultural patterns of minority groups– has not yet been tested as a potential mediator between the

stereotype dimension of morality and collective action. Besides the novelty, we considered adoption of cultural patterns as a mediator because it represents a more active disposition toward cultural engagement that entails changes within the individual and extends beyond purely evaluative or emotional constructs. As such, engaging with another group's culture may be associated with greater identification with it, which is linked to engagement in actions benefiting disadvantaged groups (Gaertner et al., 1993; Kunst et al., 2015).

Therefore, we aimed to analyze the relationship between Spaniards' perceptions of Moroccans' morality and their disposition to participate in collective action to support their rights, and to examine whether this association may be linked via Spaniards' willingness to adopt Moroccan cultural patterns.

Moroccans are the largest immigrant group in Spain (approximately 14 %, INE, 2025), and the most devalued (e.g., Constantin & Cuadrado, 2021; López-Rodríguez et al., 2013; Vázquez-Flores et al., 2025). This highlights the need to seek strategies to improve their conditions, especially considering the role of the majority group in perpetuating their situation.

We expected that perceived morality would be more strongly associated with the adoption of Moroccan cultural patterns than contact quantity and quality. We also anticipated that the adoption of Moroccan cultural patterns would be positively linked to collective action and that morality would be indirectly related to collective action through the adoption of Moroccan cultural patterns more strongly than contact quantity and quality.

Method

Participants

After exclusions regarding preestablished criteria, the final sample consisted of 643 Spaniards (53 % females; $M = 30.31$, $SD = 14.57$). Most of the participants were students (48.7 %) or workers (43.9 %) living mainly in Andalusia (southern Spain, 81.9 %). The majority had university studies (51.6 %) or high school/professional training (34.5 %), an average monthly family income between €1001 and 2000, and average political beliefs of 2.8 (between left [2] and center [3]).

Instruments

Perceived Morality was measured with five items adapted from Sayans-Jiménez et al. (2017): "To what extent do you consider that Moroccan people in Spain are…" (e.g., sincere, honest; $\alpha = .91$) on a scale from 1 (*not at all*) to 5 (*totally*).

Contact Quantity was measured with a single item: "How much contact do you have with Moroccan people?" on a scale ranging from 1 (*not at all*) to 5 (*very much*).

Contact Quality was measured with a single item from Navas and Rojas (2010): "How is the contact you have with Moroccan people?" on a scale ranging from 1 (*very unpleasant*) to 5 (*very pleasant*).

Adoption of Moroccan Cultural Patterns was measured with seven items adapted from Haugen and Kunst (2017): "To what extent do you consider each of the following issues important to you …" (i.e., to maintain contact with Moroccan people, to adopt customs of Moroccan culture, to let Moroccan culture be part of my lifestyle, to live according to the values of Moroccan culture, to follow the traditions of Moroccan culture, to feel that I belong to the Moroccan culture, to adopt the vision of gender roles typical of Moroccan culture; $\alpha = .88$) on a scale from 1 (*not important at all*) to 5 (*very important*).

Collective Action to Support Moroccans' Rights was measured with seven items previously used by Vázquez et al. (2021) adapted from Duncan (1999): "To what extent are you willing to take the following actions in support of Moroccan people?" (e.g., signing a petition, contributing money; $\alpha = .93$) on a scale ranging from 0 (*not willing at all*) to 6 (*completely willing*).

Procedure

Participants were asked to complete an online questionnaire via Qualtrics. We followed a no probabilistic convenience sampling method. Undergraduate students distributed the link among their acquaintances to be rewarded with extra points. The questionnaire indicated the study's purpose, the anonymity and confidentiality treatment of the data collected, the voluntary nature of the participation, the explicit consent of the participants, and a debriefing section. This study was linked to a larger project that was approved by the Bioethics Committee for Human Research of the authors' university.

Pre-registered design and deviations from the pre-registration

The study was pre-registered to test the effects of an experimental manipulation of Moroccan cultural values on morality stereotypes, majority-group cultural adoption, and collective action intentions, exploring some potential mediators. No significant differences emerged between experimental conditions on any variable, and without a control condition, the specific effects could not be determined. Despite the lack of main effects, we recognized the potential for interesting theoretical associations within the data, particularly given the relative scarcity of research on majority-group cultural adoption. Despite many important findings in recent years, this remains a promising area of study. Crucially, as far as our knowledge goes, the relationship between the adoption of Moroccan culture and the majority group's collective action intentions was largely unexplored. Furthermore, the original experimental logic posited that awareness of valuable Moroccan cultural aspects should influence stereotypes of morality about this group. Consequently, we concluded that the most innovative and theoretically insightful path was to explore the associations between

morality stereotypes, cultural adoption, and collective action intentions. The analysis was therefore shifted to investigate these specific relationships.

Results

A sensitivity analysis in G*Power (Faul et al., 2007) showed that with 643 participants, $\alpha = .05$, and .80 power, correlations of .11 or greater can be detected. To test the strength of the associations of perceived morality and contact quantity and quality with adoption of Moroccan cultural patterns and with collective action, we compared dependent correlations using Steiger's z-test. The correlation between perceived morality and adoption ($r = .40$) was greater than the correlation between contact quantity and adoption ($r = .31$), $z = 2.05$, $p = .040$, and greater than the correlation between contact quality and adoption ($r = .32$), $z = 2.35$, $p = .019$; the correlation between contact quality and adoption did not differ from that between contact quantity and adoption, $z = 0.24$, $p = .810$. After applying the Holm–Bonferroni correction none of the differences remained statistically significant (adjusted $ps \geq .057$).

We then tested whether the associations with collective action differed in magnitude. The correlation between perceived morality and collective action ($r = .55$) was greater than the correlations between contact quantity and collective action ($r = .28$), $z = 6.66$, $p < .001$, and between contact quality and collective action ($r = .41$), $z = 4.67$, $p < .001$. In addition, the association between contact quality and collective action was stronger than that between contact quantity and collective action, $z = 3.57$, $p < .001$. All three differences remained significant after Holm–Bonferroni correction (all adjusted $ps \leq .003$), indicating that the association between perceived morality and collective action was consistently stronger than the associations involving contact-based variables (See Table 1).

To test whether the perceived morality and contact (quantity and quality) were indirectly associated with the disposition to participate in collective action to support Moroccans' rights through the adoption of Moroccan cultural patterns, we standardized all variables and used Hayes's (2018) PROCESS macro for SPSS. We specified perceived morality (X_1), contact quantity (X_2), and contact quality (X_3) as the predictors, adoption of Moroccan cultural patterns as the mediator (M_1), and collective action as the outcome (Y_1).[1] A Monte Carlo power analysis (Schoemann, 2020) with 643 participants, 5000 replications, and $\alpha = .05$ indicated estimated power of 1.00 to detect the indirect association (a-b) for X1 and X2, and .25 for X3. Indirect associations were considered statistically significant if the 95 % bootstrap confidence interval (CI) did not include zero.

The analyses showed that there was an indirect association between perceived morality and collective action via adoption of Moroccan cultural patterns, $B = .10$, $SE = .02$, 95 % CI [0.0707, 0.1418], and between quantity contact and collective action through adoption of Moroccan cultural patterns, $B = .07$, $SE = .01$, 95 % CI [0.0408, 0.0967], but not in terms of contact quality, $B = .01$, $SE = .01$, 95 % CI [-0.0129, 0.0449]. That is, perceiving Moroccans as moral and having higher levels of contact with them were associated with Spaniards' willingness to adopt more of Moroccan cultural patterns, which in turn was associated with a greater disposition to engage in collective action to support their rights (See Fig. 1).

We explored the interaction of stereotypes of morality with both contact quantity and contact quality, drawing on previous literature (Borinca et al., 2024). Morality was significantly associated with adoption of Moroccan cultural patterns; the association varied by contact quantity ($B = .08$, $SE = .02$, $p < .001$). The association strengthened at higher levels of contact quantity (low: $B = .21$; mean: $B = .29$; high: $B = .37$; $ps < .001$). The moderated mediation index was significant (Index $= .05$, $SE = .02$, 95 % CI [.0179, .0821]), indicating that the link between stereotypes of morality and collective action through adoption was stronger at higher contact levels. The two-way interaction between stereotypes of morality and contact quality was not significant.

Discussion

Addressing inequality requires the involvement of disadvantaged groups as well as motivating advantaged groups to become allies and actively engage in social change. This is a challenge because privileged groups often resist change to maintain their status quo and may even justify the system that perpetuates these inequalities through negative stereotypes toward disadvantaged groups (e.g., Jost & Banaji, 1994). Therefore, it remains necessary to explore aspects associated with the advantaged groups becoming allies of the disadvantaged groups beyond traditional elements (see van Zomeren, 2013).

We analyzed the relationship between Spaniards' perceptions of the morality of Moroccan people and their disposition to participate in collective action to support their rights and examined whether this relationship was linked via the willingness of Spaniards to adopt Moroccan cultural patterns.

First, we compared the associations of perceived morality (vs. contact quantity and quality) with the adoption of Moroccan cultural patterns. Our results showed that morality was more strongly associated with the adoption of Moroccan cultural patterns than both contact quantity and quality. This is in line with previous literature showing the key role of morality in social perception (e.g., Brambilla et al., 2019, 2021; López-Rodríguez et al., 2013). This confirms that morality and acculturation are strongly related (López-Rodríguez & Zagefka, 2015; Maisonneuve et al., 2023; Urbiola et al., 2021) by further showing that the stereotype dimension of morality is associated with majority's cultural adoption processes (e.g., Kunst et al., 2025; Vázquez-Flores et al., 2023).

Our results showed that the adoption of Moroccan cultural patterns was positively linked to collective action. Although previous research has suggested that acculturation processes may be related to collective action (e.g., Brylka et al., 2015; Kunst et al., 2015), our

[1] Sex, age, political orientation, and income were also controlled for, as none were directly associated with the adoption of Moroccan cultural patterns and therefore cannot be considered as predictors, although results including them are reported.

Table 1
Means and correlations of perceived morality, contact quantity and quality, adoption of Moroccan cultural patterns, and collective action of Spaniards toward Moroccans

	1	2	3	4	5	*M*	*SD*
1. Perceived Morality	1	**.21****	**.51****	**.40****	**.55****	3.29	.77
2. Contact Quantity		1	**.45****	**.31****	**.28****	2.77	1.05
3. Contact Quality			1	**.32****	**.41****	3.72	.82
4. Adoption				1	**.51****	1.84	.67
5. Collective Action					1	2.92	1.36

Note. ** $p \leq .01$.

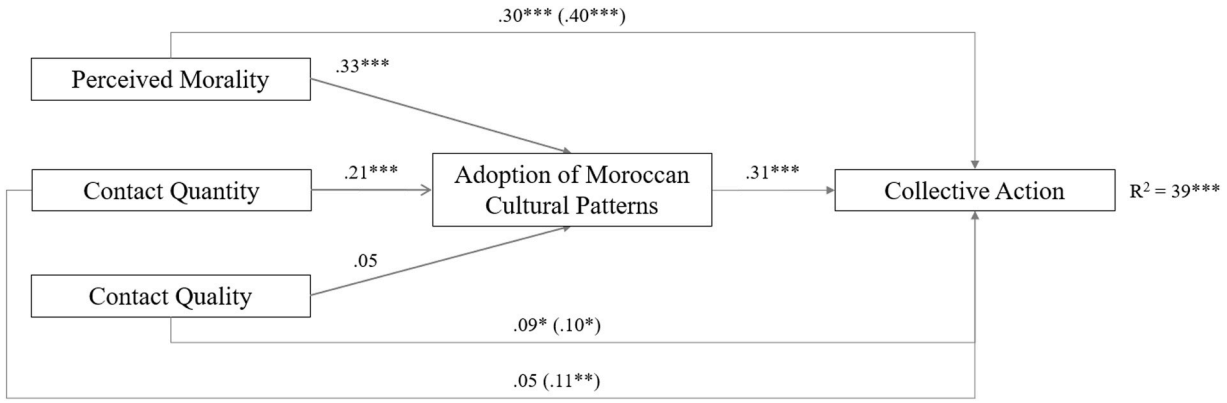

Fig. 1. Mediation model of perceived morality, contact quantity and quality, adoption of Moroccan cultural patterns, and collective action of Spaniards toward Moroccans.
Note. Values outside parentheses refer to direct effects, while values inside parentheses refer to total effects. *$p \leq .05$, **$p \leq .01$, ***$p \leq .001$.

study extends this work by specifically examining the relation between the adoption of cultural patterns of disadvantaged groups and the interest of advantaged groups in participating in collective action that supports them. As proposed by the AMIGAS model (Urbiola et al., 2022), our findings highlight an association between cultural elements and the disposition of majority groups to engage in collective action benefiting disadvantaged groups.

Furthermore, our results showed that perceived morality was indirectly and more strongly related to collective action through the adoption of Moroccan cultural patterns than contact quantity and quality. Intergroup contact is traditionally associated with positive intergroup relationships (e.g., Allport, 1954; Pettigrew & Tropp, 2008), and ambivalently to collective action (e.g., Carmona-López et al., 2025; Cocco et al., 2024). Our results confirm that contact quantity is related to Spaniards' disposition to engage in collective action in support of Moroccan rights, but not as strongly as perceived morality. The perceived morality of disadvantaged groups appears to be related to a greater willingness of advantaged groups to learn their culture and, in turn, engage in actions that benefit the status of disadvantaged groups. One possible explanation is that cultural learning may be connected to changes in the identity of advantaged groups members; by integrating their cultural elements, they may identify more strongly with these groups and therefore even come to see these issues as their own. Common identities enhance the efforts of the majority group in social action on behalf of minority groups (Gaertner et al., 1993; Kunst et al., 2015). Therefore, the interest of Spaniards in adopting Moroccan culture should be understood as a process of mutual learning rather than as cultural appropriation (Kunst et al., 2024; Vázquez-Flores et al., 2023), and that these shared elements product of acculturation processes may be associated with a greater tendency of advantaged groups to act collectively on behalf of disadvantaged groups.

This study has several limitations, including its correlational and cross-sectional design, a non-representative sample distributed by undergraduates in southern Spain, exclusively online data collection, focus on a single immigrant group, using single items when measuring contact quantity and quality, which prevents capturing the multidimensional nature of contact interactions, and the shift from the originally planned experimental design to a correlational approach. These factors prevent from establishing the direction of causality and may introduce sociodemographic biases that restrict the generalizability of the findings, which should therefore be interpreted with caution. Additionally, the statistical power for analyses involving contact quality was low, limiting the interpretability of null results. Future studies should use experimental or longitudinal designs, representative samples, and multiple data collection methods, while also considering cultural or contextual boundaries and whether similar mechanisms operate in other groups or national settings.

Another limitation is that we focus only on traditional forms of collective action (e.g., petitions, donations), whereas recent studies (e.g., Borinca & Spears, 2025) suggest that more disruptive forms (e.g., online activism, cyberattacks) should also be considered. Therefore, our study may not capture important nuances in how moral evaluations relate to different action responses. Although our work highlights the relevance of studying the adoption of cultural patterns, it is important to acknowledge that engagement with new

cultures may also be influenced by institutional and structural barriers, which could shape the opportunities for majority group participation.

Despite the limitations, the present research makes two main theoretical contributions. First, it provides further evidence that the stereotype dimension of morality plays a primary role, compared to intergroup contact, in both majority-group cultural adoption and collective action intentions. Considering Moroccans as trustworthy may relate to the interest among Spaniards in learning about their culture and adopting it, fostering closer intergroup relations in which groups not only coexist but are also willing to learn from one another, activating an intercultural dialogue. Second, our findings are also pioneering by suggesting that the adoption of cultural patterns may be relevant for the willingness of advantaged group members to engage in collective action. To our knowledge, this study is the first to examine the relationship between perceived morality and collective action while considering the potential mediating role of the majority-group adoption of minority cultural patterns. These results may have practical implications for educational, policy, and organizational contexts. They can inform sensitivity and intervention programs in universities, NGOs, and local governments, as well as guide the design of communication campaigns aimed at encouraging advantaged group members to engage in collective actions to support the rights and improve the life conditions of disadvantaged groups.

CRediT authorship contribution statement

Erika Vázquez-Flores: Writing – review & editing, Writing – original draft, Visualization, Validation, Supervision, Software, Methodology, Investigation, Funding acquisition, Formal analysis, Data curation, Conceptualization. **Lucía López-Rodríguez:** Writing – review & editing, Writing – original draft, Visualization, Supervision, Project administration, Methodology, Investigation, Funding acquisition, Conceptualization. **Marisol Navas:** Writing – review & editing, Writing – original draft, Supervision, Project administration, Methodology, Investigation, Conceptualization. **Marco Brambilla:** Writing – review & editing, Supervision, Methodology, Investigation, Conceptualization.

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Conflict of Interest

The authors declare that there is no conflict of interest.

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