

Emotion Science Symposium

Main subject area: Affect & Emotion

Preferred time slot: 1.5 hours, Morning time slot on August 30th

Symposium organiser and chair: Dr. Michael Philipp
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Details of presentations (abstracts attached):

1. **Smiling to Smiles After Exclusion: Social Rejection Enhances Affiliative Signalling.**
presenter: Michael Philipp, Massey University.
2. **Emoticons as genuine expressions of emotion.** *presenter:* Tracey Bear, Massey University.
3. **Do Hypoxia-driven Changes in Mood Affect Cognition?** *presenter:* Stephen Hill, Massey University.
4. **Predictably regretful: A comparison of the effects of time, domain, justification, and life rule contradiction on the intensity of regrets.** *presenter:* Matt Williams, Massey University.
5. **The effect of gender and cognitive errors on depressive symptoms in adolescence.**
presenter: Tatiana Tairi, Massey University.

1. Smiling to Smiles After Exclusion: Social Rejection Enhances Affiliative Signalling.
presenter: Michael Philipp, Massey University.

Presentation Title

Smiling to Smiles After Exclusion: Social Rejection Enhances Affiliative Signalling

Authors

Michael Philipp, School of Psychology, Massey University
 Michael Bernstein, Dept of Psychology, Penn State University, Abington, USA
 Eric J Vanman, School of Psychology, University of Queensland, Australia
 Lucy Johnston, University of Canterbury

Presenter Contact Information

Michael Philipp, Lecturer in Research Methods
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Abstract

Reciprocating others' smiles is important for maintaining social connections as it both signals a common affective state to others and possibly induces empathetic reactions in the actor. Feelings of social exclusion may increase such "mimicry" as a means to improve affiliative bonds with others. Whether smile reciprocation differs based on the perceived smile type was the focus of this study. Young adults wrote about either a time they were excluded or a neutral event. They then viewed a series of smiles-half genuine and half posed. Facial electromyography recorded muscle activity involved in smiling. Excluded participants better distinguished the two smile types. They also showed greater zygomaticus (cheek) activity toward genuine smiles compared to posed smiles; non-excluded participants did not. The extent to which participants reciprocated the smiles was unrelated to their ability to distinguish between smile types. Affiliative motivation is discussed as a possible explanation for these effects.

Topics: experimental psychology, social behaviour, emotion perception

2. **Emoticons as genuine expressions of emotion.** *presenter:* Tracey Bear, Massey University.

Presentation Title

Emoticons are processed as genuine expressions of emotion

Authors

Tracey Bear, School of Psychology, Massey University

Michael Philipp, School of Psychology, Massey University

Presenter Contact Information

Tracey Bear, Junior Research Officer

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Abstract

Emoticons reduce semantic ambiguity and express emotional meaning in written communication. Our fluency in processing emoticons suggests they are more than mere symbols of feeling. Recent evidence suggests that emoticons are processed configurally—recruiting face-specific neural processes to make sense of their meaning. If emoticons are automatically processed as face stimuli, emoticons should elicit fast-onset facial mimicry expressions similar to those elicited by real emotional expressions. Using electromyography, the present study examines whether *normal* (mouth to the right) and *inverted* (mouth to the left) emoticons elicit different patterns of mimicry responses. Mimicry responses of the *upright* and *inverted* emoticons were compared to photographed emotional expressions. Mimicry activity for *upright* emoticons was most similar to photographed emotional expressions. Mimicry activity for *inverted* emoticons was reduced or non-existent. These findings support the notion that emoticons are cognitively processed as real, emotional stimuli.

Topics: experimental psychology, emotion perception

3. **Do Hypoxia-driven Changes in Mood Affect Cognition?** *presenter:* Stephen Hill, Massey University.

Presentation Title

Do Hypoxia-driven Changes in Mood Affect Cognition?

Authors

Stephen Hill, School of Psychology, Massey University

Stephen Legg, Centre for Ergonomics, Occupational Safety and Health, Massey Univ

Andrew Gilbey, School of Aviation, Massey University

Toby Mundel, School of Sport and Exercise, Massey University

Aaron Raman, School of Sport and Exercise, Massey University

Anne Dubray, University of Paris-Sud, France

Gareth Iremonger, Royal New Zealand Airforce Aviation Medicine Unit

Presenter Contact Information

Stephen Hill, Senior Lecturer

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Abstract

On a typical flight in a modern airliner, the decreased pressure in the cabin reduces blood oxygen saturation from >97% at sea-level to below 92%. Although most previous research has shown that exposure to this mild level of hypoxia does not affect basic cognition, motor performance, and mood, there is some evidence that complex cognitive functioning might be affected. In order to get a deeper understanding of the effects of mild hypoxia on cognition and mood 36 RNZAF personnel completed cognitive tasks and mood measures using the ANAM, Automated Neurophysiological Assessment Metrics battery in a hypobaric chamber at pressures equivalent to 0, 8,000, and 12,000 ft, both with and without supplementary oxygen. Direct effects of hypoxia on cognition and mood were limited. In this presentation we report recent analyses of the effect of hypoxia on the mood-cognition relationship.

Topics: applied psychology, cognition, emotion

4. **Predictably regretful: A comparison of the effects of time, domain, justification, and life rule contradiction on the intensity of regrets.** *presenter:* Matt Williams, Massey University.

Presentation Title

Predictably regretful: A comparison of the effects of time, domain, justification, and life rule contradiction on the intensity of regrets.

Authors

Matt N. Williams, School of Psychology, Massey University
 Andy Towers, School of Psychology, Massey University
 Michael Philipp, School of Psychology, Massey University
 Stephen R. Hill, School of Psychology, Massey University

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Abstract

Background. Several theories have been advanced to explain variation in the intensity of regret. Thus far, these theories have been tested in isolation.

Aim: To compare the effects of several key theoretical variables on regret intensity: The time since the regretted event, whether the regret was one of action or inaction, the level of justification felt, and whether or not the regretted decision violated the participant's personal life rules.

Method: A postal survey of 429 New Zealand adults.

Conclusions: Contradicting folk wisdom and previous research, action regrets were felt more intensely than inaction regrets. The passing of time led to action regrets being felt even more intensely (in comparison to regrets of inaction), falsifying a prediction of the temporal theory of regret. The strongest predictor of regret intensity was the domain of regret: Regrets in intimate domains were felt more intensely than regrets in non-intimate domains.

Topics: survey design, regret

5. **The effect of gender and cognitive errors on depressive symptoms in adolescence.**
presenter: Tatiana Tairi, Massey University.

Presentation Title

The effect of gender and cognitive errors on depressive symptoms in adolescence

Authors

Tatiana Tairi, Lecturer in Professional Psychology, Massey University
 Michael Philipp, Lecturer in Research Methods, Massey University

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Abstract

Depressive disorders represent one of the most prevalent mental health problems in adolescents. By and large, depressive symptoms appear to increase sharply in adolescence, particularly in girls, with prevalence rates among girls doubling those for boys. In this paper, the gender differences of depressed affect are examined among adolescents, with a special focus on the influence of different cognitive errors on depression scores. Results indicated a main effect of gender and the cognitive errors of catastrophising, overgeneralisation and selective abstraction. Girls had higher depression scores than boys, and higher cognitive errors scores predicted greater depression. However, the main effect of gender was qualified by an interaction between gender and overgeneralisation errors. Specifically, overgeneralisation is a stronger predictor of depressive symptoms among girls than boys. Importantly, gender becomes a very weak predictor of depression when this disparity is accounted for. These findings along with suggestions for further research are discussed.

Topics: clinical psychology research, depression, cognitive errors