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The Psychophysiology of Sexual Prejudice

Is it in us all?

PUBLIC DISPLAYS OF AFFECTION



- Include various forms of physical interaction that indicate a couple's affection for each other
- PDAs are beneficial to one's physical health and help strengthen relationships
- However, same-sex couples report engaging in fewer PDAs than mixed-sex couples
 - Despite general trend toward more positive attitudes toward LGB people in the US and Canada

WHY DO SAME-SEX COUPLES ENGAGE IN PDA LESS OFTEN?



- Concerns about safety and experiencing discrimination
- Experience of stress when seeing people look away or give looks of shock, discomfort or disgust

WHY DO SAME-SEX COUPLES ENGAGE IN PDA LESS OFTEN?



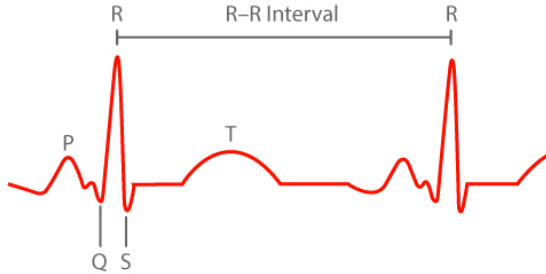
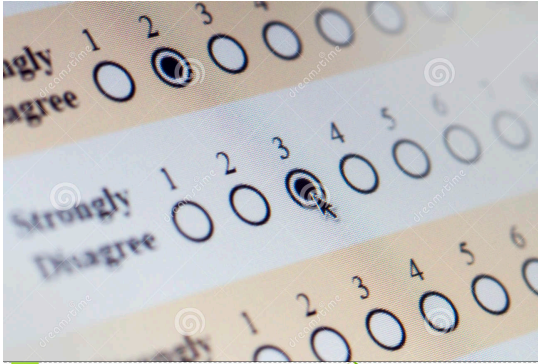
- To manage this perceived stigma LGB people are engaging in less PDA
- But there is very little research on what reactions to same-sex PDAs actually are

WHY DO SAME-SEX COUPLES ENGAGE IN PDA LESS OFTEN?



- Are those in same-sex relationships internalizing what they believe are society's views?
 - Thus refraining from PDA due to imagined responses that may not even be occurring?
- Are they responding to visual cues about onlookers' automatic responses to same-sex PDA?
 - If so, what are these automatic responses and how do we measure them?

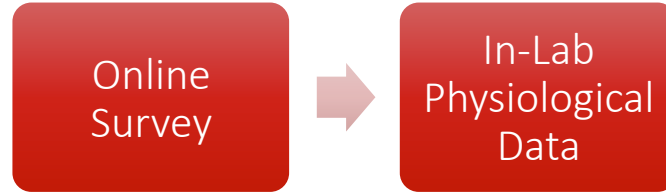
AUTOMATIC RESPONSES



AUTOMATIC RESPONSES



PROCEDURE



MEASURES



- Demographic Measure
- Modern Homonegativity Scale (MHS)
- Attitudes Toward Lesbians and Gay Men Scale (ATLG)
- Saliva

Greenwald, McGhee & Schwartz, 1998; Herek, 1994; Morrison & Morrison, 2003

SLIDESHOWS



- Presented in random order
- 5 minutes each
- Six kinds of images



HYPOTHESIS



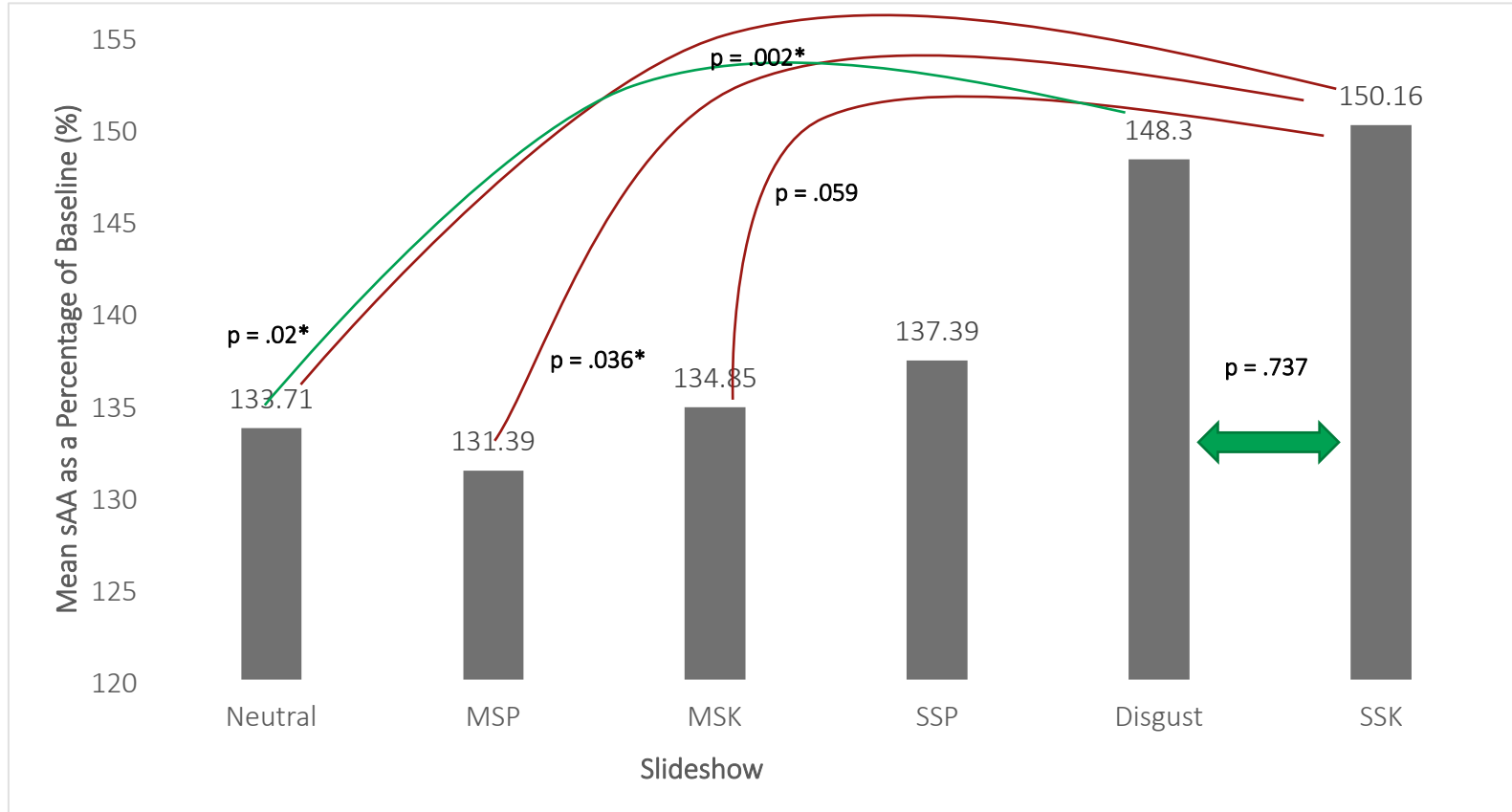
- Participants who display more negative attitudes toward same-sex sexuality will exhibit greater sAA responses when viewing images of same-sex kissing.
 - Exception: Disgust

PARTICIPANTS



- N = 120 men living in Utah
- Mean age = 26.87
- 62.5% Mormon
 - 50.8% of all participants attended religious services weekly
- All fell within 0-2 on the Kinsey scale
 - 74.2% exclusively heterosexual
 - 16.7% only incidentally homosexual
 - 6.7% more than incidentally homosexual

RESULTS



DISCUSSION



- H_1 : Those high in sexual prejudice will display greater physiological responses to same-sex kissing
 - Not supported
- All participants, regardless of level of sexual prejudice, experienced greater sAA responses to same-sex kissing
 - Socialization of same-sex kissing as disgusting
 - Sexual stigma

Herek 2009; Kiebel et al., 2016

IMPLICATIONS



- Results suggest that automatic physiological responses to same-sex PDAs exist
 - Not just in those that are high in sexual prejudice
- Possible that those in same-sex relationships are responding to visual cues about these responses when they refrain from PDA
 - Further research needed to determine this

LIMITATIONS



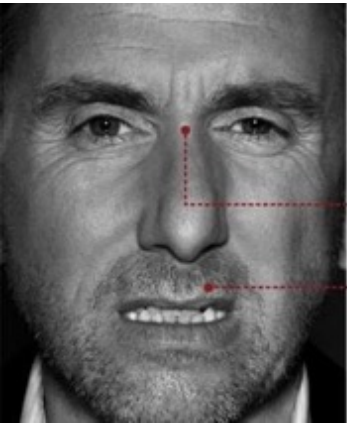
- Majority of sample were Mormon
- Small sample size
- Length of in-lab portion

NEXT STEP



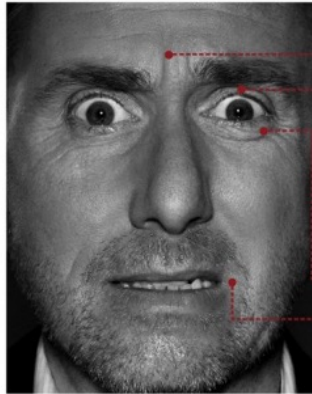
- Heart rate data
- Facial expression analyses

FACIAL EXPRESSION ANALYSES



disgust

- ① nose wrinkling
- ② upper lip raised



fear

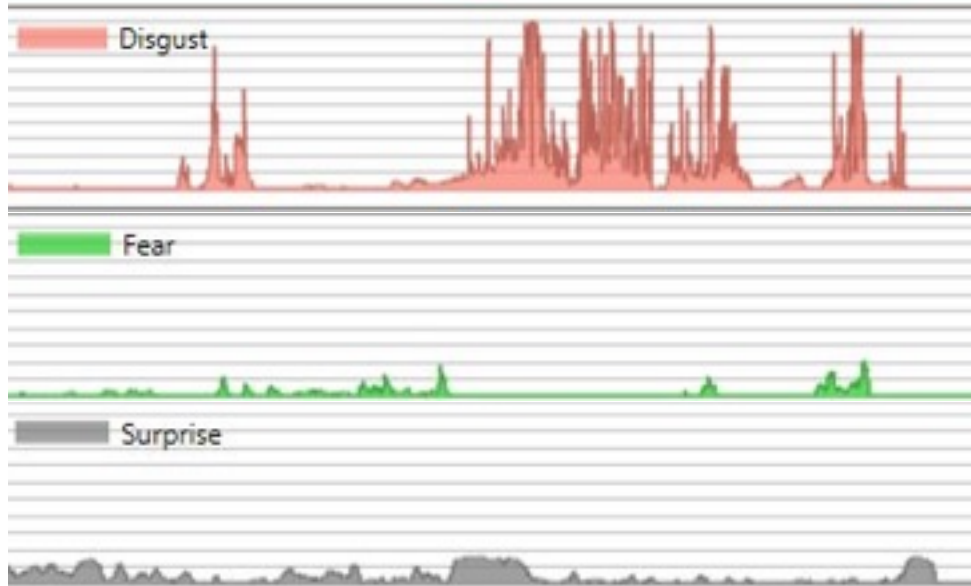
- ① eyebrows raised and pulled together
- ② raised upper eyelids
- ③ tensed lower eyelids
- ④ lips slightly stretched horizontally back to ears



contempt

- ① lip corner tightened and raised on only one side of face

FACIAL EXPRESSION ANALYSES



- Provides measure of how often participants are expressing each emotion
- Infer emotional experience
- Helps determine if onlookers to same-sex PDAs are giving visual cues

FUTURE DIRECTIONS



- Eyetracking technology
- Diverse samples
- Gender diverse target images

THANK YOU



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