

## DEPRESSED MOOD MODULATES THE PERCEPTION OF EMOTION FACIAL EXPRESSIONS: THE ROLE OF PERSONALITY VULNERABILITY FACTORS

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**Introduction:** Deficits in decoding emotion facial expressions have been reported in depressed patients and in subclinical depression. These deficits would be related to an attentional bias towards negative vs. positive expressions in the late stages of face processing. Such emotional bias would be a vulnerability factor for depression. Vulnerability to depressed mood has also been related to specific personality patterns (namely: high harm avoidance and low selfdirectedness) and it was advanced that personality-related differences in emotional stimulus processing might mediate this vulnerability.

**Objectives:** Therefore, the present study aims to precise the role of personality in emotion facial expression perception deficits in subclinical depression, by the mean of event-related potentials (ERPs).

**Methods:** ERPs were recorded in 21 subclinically depressed participants and 18 not-depressed ones, while they were presented neutral and emotional faces (happy, sad, fearful).

**Results:** The results show that in subclinically depressed participants only, happy faces elicited smaller P300 and LPP amplitudes than both negative and neutral faces, while earlier processing stages were not modulated by depressed mood. Covariance analysis indicated that these modulations are related to the decreased selfdirectedness reported in subclinically depressed participants, but not to increased harm avoidance.

**Conclusions:** These results suggest that harm avoidance would be independent from the specific bias of emotional face processing related to depressed mood, whereas selfdirectedness would be involved in this phenomenon. The results will be discussed regarding clinical implications.