Emotion is perceived accurately from isolated body parts, especially hands

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Introduction

• Bodies are essential for emotion recognition (e.g., Aviezer et al., 2012)
  - Neutral bodies are perceived holistically (Reed et al., 2006)
  - Body parts do contribute to emotion perception (e.g., Pollick et al., 2001)

• QUESTION 1: Can emotions be recognized accurately from body parts?
• QUESTION 2: Are emotions recognized more accurately from the hands than from the other body parts?
  • Here, we compared emotion recognition accuracy for isolated images of hands, arms, heads and torsos with that for full bodies

Methods

Results

Emotions Can be Classified from Isolated Body Parts

• Recognition accuracy higher than chance (16.7%) for all body parts
• Main effect of body condition \( F(3.70, 366.43) = 513.75, p < .001, \eta^2 = .838 \)
• Differences between all body parts (all \( ps = < .001 \))

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Discussion

• Emotion can be decoded from body parts
  • The hands are particularly effective at communicating emotion

References

