

Publication

Age and motivation predict gaze behavior for facial expressions

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This study investigated age-related differences between younger ($M = 25.52$ years) and older ($M = 70.51$ years) adults in avoidance motivation and the influence of avoidance motivation on gaze preferences for happy, neutral, and angry faces. In line with the hypothesis of reduced negativity effect later in life, older adults avoided angry faces and (to a lesser degree) preferred happy faces more than younger adults did. This effect cannot be explained by age-related changes in dispositional motivation. Irrespective of age, avoidance motivation predicted gaze behavior towards emotional faces. The study demonstrates the importance of interindividual differences beyond young adulthood.

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