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The Role of Visual Attention in Face Processing

There is some evidence that processing of irrelevant distractor faces is unaffected by processing of task-relevant non-face objects, but is impaired by the processing of a task-relevant target face. It was suggested that face processing operates to a certain extent independently of general processing resources, but has its own capacity limit, such that only a single face can be processed at a time. I will present recent data from both behavioural and electrophysiological studies that have been conducted in the field of the role of attention in face processing. I will focus on the role of capacity limitation of distractor face processing and present data that I have collected in an experiment using a repetition priming paradigm. Briefly, I could not replicate findings of irrelevant face distractor priming, irrespective of the target type (face/non-face). I will discuss possible explanations for these results.