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PAIN ELICITED BY THE COLD PRESSOR TEST: A GENDER-COMPARATIVE FACS CODING STUDY OF SPONTANEOUS, FAKED AND INHIBITED EXPRESSIONS

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Abstract

Evolutionary theories of pain have conjectured a better ability of males to control their facial expressions of pain, and of females to express and communicate emotions through the face. The present study involved 24 participants (12 men; 12 women). Pain was induced via the Cold Pressor Test (CPT), and three expressive contexts (spontaneous, faked an inhibited) were created through instructions. Elicited pain expressions were FACS coded and frequency, indices were derived for the observed Action Units. Differences in the number of Actions Units activated by men and women were found in all conditions. AU25 occurred more frequently in women in the spontaneous context and AU24 in simulated condition. No gender differences were found concerning pain smiles.