

Study: Men good at anger, women with joy

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A Massachusetts Institute of Technology study shows men are good at noticing angry faces, with women good at noticing surprised, sad or joyful expressions.

"The really interesting effect is the difference between males and females," Mark Williams, the study's lead author, told The New York Times.

Williams, a MIT postdoctoral fellow -- along with study co-author Jason Mattingley, a psychology professor at Australia's University of Melbourne -- wanted to determine how people identified emotions reflected in facial expressions.

The researchers showed pictures of human faces to 78 men and 78 women, with the photographs displaying varying expressions of anger, fear, happiness, surprise, disgust or neutrality. Participants were then asked in separate procedures to identify the emotions from among neutral ones.

Williams and Mattingley said both men and women consistently detected angry faces more quickly than terrified ones but the ease of detecting those angry faces depended on the participant's sex.

Men, the scientists found, were significantly faster than women when asked to find an angry face. On the other hand, women were quicker in identifying happy, sad, surprised or disgusted faces than were males.

The study is detailed in the journal *Current Biology*.

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