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## How alexithymia affects the visual processing of emotional and movement-related body postures

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Body postures convey useful information for understanding others emotions and intentions. Visual encoding of body postures, reflected by the N190 component, is modulated both by motion (i.e., postures implying motion elicit greater N190 amplitudes than static postures) and by emotion related content (i.e., fearful postures elicit the largest N190 amplitude). At a later stage, there is a fear-related increase in attention, reflected by an early posterior negativity (EPN). Here, we tested whether difficulties in emotional processing (i.e., alexithymia characterized by difficulty identifying feelings, difficulty describing feelings, and an externally oriented thinking style) affect early and late visual processing of body postures. Low alexithymic participants showed emotional modulation of the N190, with fearful postures specifically enhancing N190 amplitude suggesting the existence of a specialized perceptual mechanism tuned to emotion- and motion-related information conveyed by human body postures. In contrast, high alexithymic participants showed no emotional modulation of the N190. Both groups showed preserved encoding of the motion content. At a later stage, a fear-related modulation of the EPN was found for both groups, suggesting that selective attention to salient stimuli is the same in both low and high alexithymia.

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