

Linking Disgust and Misophonia: The Role of Mental Contamination

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Abstract : In the current study, the authors sought to examine whether the links between moral and sexual disgust and misophonia are mediated by mental contamination. An internationally diverse sample of 283 adults (193 females, 76 males, and 14 non-binary individuals) ranging in age from 18 to 60 years old was recruited from online social media platforms and survey recruitment sites. The sample completed an online battery of scales that consisted of the New York Misophonia Scale, State Mental Contamination Scale, and the Three-Domain Disgust Scale. The hypotheses were evaluated using a series of mediations performed using the PROCESS add-on in SPSS. Correlations were found between emotional and aggressive-avoidant reactions in misophonia, mental contamination, pathogen disgust, and sexual disgust. Moral disgust and non-aggressive reactions in misophonia failed to correlate significantly with any of the other constructs. Sexual disgust had direct and indirect effects, while pathogen disgust had only direct effects on aspects of misophonia. These findings partially support our hypothesis that mental contamination mediates the link between disgust propensity and misophonia while also confirming that pathogen-based disgust is not associated with mental contamination. Findings imply that misophonia is distinct from obsessive-compulsive disorder. Further research into the conceptualization of moral disgust is warranted.

Keywords : misophonia, moral disgust, pathogen disgust, sexual disgust, mental contamination

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