

TALK

**PARENTS ARE LESS DISGUST SENSITIVE THAN CHILDLESS
INDIVIDUALS, AND A CHILD'S PRESENCE HAS NO EFFECT ON DISGUST
SENSITIVITY OF A PARENT**

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ABSTRACT

A child's immune system is underdeveloped, and compensatory mechanisms are needed to protect a child from pathogen threat. Increased disgust sensitivity in a child's parent could be such a mechanism. We tested whether parents are more disgust sensitive than non-parents. Subsequently, we sought for a child presence effect, i.e., that disgust sensitivity in parents increases when their offspring is nearby. In a sample of N=995, we found women to be more disgust sensitive than men, and parents to be less sensitive to generalized pathogen disgust than childless individuals. We found no support for the child presence effect. Persistent sex differences in disgust, and underdeveloped immune system in children need other explanations in terms of their origins and compensatory adaptations, respectively.