

TALK

AN ADAPTATIONIST PERSPECTIVE FOR TRYPOPHOBIA: WHY CONTEXT MATTERS

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ABSTRACT

Trypophobia is the discomfort that some people have when viewing small clusters of objects (often holes) and is a relatively new phenomenon known to the scientific community. Recent research suggests that this seemingly irrational response may function to avoid evolutionarily-relevant situations, and two adaptive frameworks currently exist in an attempt to explain this response. First, we will briefly review our work which tests what visual characteristics lead to the biggest changes in trypophobic visual discomfort. Then, we will review recent work which shows how avoiding skin disease / parasitism may be the likely culprit to this response. Last, we will discuss how image context plays a pivotal role in manifesting these outcomes, with an examination of our recent project which investigates how viewing trypophobic imagery among three different manipulated scenarios (contexts) impacts discomfort levels, and how individual levels of trypophobic tendencies, as measured by the Trypophobia Questionnaire (TQ), impact judgements.