

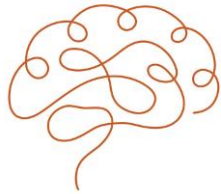
School Meetings

Psychological
Sciences PhD



Thursdays at 1 pm
Cesare Musatti Hall, Psico 1 building

The smell of prejudice. Body odor disgust sensitivity and social behavior from an evolutionary perspective



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The Behavioral Immune System (BIS) is a set of psychological mechanisms thought to have evolved to detect, emotionally react to, and avoid potential pathogen threats. Disgust, a primary emotion, plays a pivotal role in the BIS, and my research focuses particularly on disgust triggered by body odors. Olfaction is a sense crucial for detecting pathogen threats such as diseases that may affect body odors. In our studies, my collaborators and I validated a new instrument for measuring individual differences in Body Odor Disgust Sensitivity (BODS) and established its nomological validity by exploring how BODS relates to social phenomena that may stem from the overgeneralization of pathogen detection—such as xenophobia. We found consistent evidence that BODS correlates with prejudice against foreigners, both explicitly and implicitly. Multivariate analyses suggest that this BIS-prejudice link may be partly driven by perceived differences in cultural norms regarding food preparation and hygiene. Additionally, we replicated these findings across various countries and continents, bolstering the external validity of our results.

Marco Tullio Liuzza, PhD, is an Associate Professor at the DPSS, University of Padua. He earned his PhD from the Department of Psychology at La Sapienza University of Rome and completed post-doctoral research in both Rome and Stockholm. He has served as both an Assistant and Associate Professor at the University of Catanzaro. He made several contributions to the study of body odor disgust sensitivity and its impact on social attitudes. His research interests focus on psychometric validation, Bayesian methods in psychology, and open science. Marco Tullio is also actively involved in multi-lab projects, such as the Many Smiles collaboration.

