

## 54. 香りと記憶の関係(2)：構造理解

Scents are the only sensations that travel such a direct path to the emotional and memory centers of the brain. All other senses first travel to an area of the brain called the thalamus, which acts as a control panel, sending information about the things we see, hear, or feel to the rest of the brain, said Professor John McGann.

But scents go past the thalamus and reach the amygdala and the hippocampus almost directly.

That results in an intimate connection between emotions, memories, and scents.

This is why memories triggered by scents as opposed to other senses are “experienced as more emotional and more vivid,” said Rachel Herz, an assistant professor of psychiatry.

A familiar but long-forgotten scent can even bring people to tears, she added.

Scents are “really special” because “they can bring back memories that might otherwise never be recalled,” Herz said. By comparison, the everyday sight of familiar people and places will not cause you to remember very specific memories. For example, walking into your living room is something you do over and over again, so the action is unlikely to recall a specific moment that took place in that room.

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