

**THE UNIVERSITY OF NEW SOUTH WALES
Additional Study (Debriefing) Information****Rapid Target Search**

Thank you for participating in our study. Below is some additional background on the purpose of our study, for your information.

(a) What are the research questions?

Our study aims to assess whether individual differences related to depression predict distraction by positive images and spontaneous encoding of positive images into memory, consistent with proposals that depressed mood is associated with less savouring of positive stimuli. (Note that our measure of depression is relative and is not diagnostic.)

(b) How does this study extend previous research on this topic?

This study builds on prior research on the emotion-induced blindness effect whereby emotional stimuli has been shown to lead to an impairment in accurately identifying a target image. Whereas most previous work has used negative emotional stimuli and has sometimes found that negative mood is linked with more distraction by negative stimuli, this study uses positive stimuli and predicts that negative mood will be linked with less distraction by them.

(c) What are some potential real-world implications of this research?

Real-world implications of this research relate to potential identification of a marker for depression. Such a marker may suggest avenues for using attentional bias modification to train attention towards positive stimuli (not just away from negative), which may provide therapeutic benefit for individuals suffering from depression.

(d) What is a potential issue or limitation of the study?

One potential issue of this study is that we are not using a diagnostic measure of depression and are capitalising on variation on this measure in the general student population. This may limit the degree to which we observe predicted individual differences.

(e) What is the methodology of this study?

This study will use a quasi-experimental design. The independent variable will be whether distracting stimuli are emotionally positive or neutral. Dependent variables will be the degree of impairment to accuracy in completing an emotion-induced blindness task and the level of memory encoding measured using a surprise memory test.

(f) Is there any further reading I can do if I am interested in this topic?

For more information about the phenomenon of emotion-induced blindness see:

- Most, S. B., Chun, M. M., Widders, D. M., & Zald, D. H. (2005). Attentional rubbernecking: Cognitive control and personality in emotion-induced blindness. *Psychonomic Bulletin & Review*, 12, 654-661. <https://doi.org/10.3758/bf03196754>

For more information on the connections between depression and savouring of positive stimuli see:

- Kahrilas, I. J., Smith, J. L., Silton, R. L., & Bryant, F. B. (2020). Savoring the moment: A link between affectivity and depression. *International Journal of Wellbeing*, 10(2). <https://doi.org/10.5502/ijw.v10i2.779>

Participant confirmation:

I have read and understood this debriefing information.