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# Feelings Touched - On Tactually Perceiving the Emotions of Others

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## Résumé

It has recently been argued that the emotions of others can be directly perceived. On such a view, when we see, e.g. an angry face - the teeth exposed, the brow furrowed, the jaw clenched - we do not merely see its low-level visual features, such as its shape, color, or spatial orientation. We also directly see its anger. Until now, the debate on direct emotion perception has remained largely confined to a visuocentric framework, with all sensory modalities beyond the visual receiving little to no attention. The aim of my presentation is to advance further our understanding of how we perceive the emotions of others by focusing on the overlooked role of touch. The presentation will be divided into three parts. In the first part of the presentation, I will discuss some evidence that human beings can accurately assess the emotions of others based solely on tactile stimulation. As in the visual domain, however, recognizing the emotions of others based on touch does not necessarily entail that said emotions are tactually perceived; it might instead involve inferring emotions from tactile cues. Thus, in the second part of the presentation, I will challenge the latter view via an argument that draws from the recent empirical literature on the relationship between purely tactile cues and our ability to recognize emotions from those cues. Lastly, in the third part of the presentation, I will explore some key differences between visual and tactile emotion perception, highlighting the unique role of touch in the perception of prosocial emotions like love, gratitude, and sympathy.

**Mots-Clés:** Direct Emotion Perception, Touch, Prosocial Emotions

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