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DOMAINS OF DISGUST SENSITIVITY IN A SPANISH NONCLINICAL SAMPLE

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Introduction and aims: Disgust has been characterized as a basic emotion, with unique physiological, behavioral and cognitive features. Although emotions have been a main subject of psychopathology over the last decades, disgust has recently been labelled as a “forgotten emotion” in psychiatry. In their original work, Haidt et al. (1994) outlined 8 domains of disgust elicitors: food, animals, body products, body envelope violation, death, sex, and hygiene, and a domain of sympathetic magic. While there is some variability in people's disgust sensitivity, this emotion has a fairly recognizable set of elicitors within a given culture. The aim of this work was to examine the kinds of domains in which Spanish experience disgust.

Method: We asked participants (students of psychology at the UNED) to describe:

- (a) the five most disgusting experiences of their lives,
- (b) the distress reactions experienced during these experiences,
- (c) and to list all things that provoke reactions of disgust to him/her or to other people.

Results: Descriptions of disgusting stimuli, objects and behaviors were conceptually classified in the following 11 domains: body products, animals, foods, envelope violations, hygiene/dirt, putrefaction, socio-moral, sex, death, disease, and marginalization/poverty. The largest of these domains were body products, animals and foods, which accounted for 64% of all descriptions. The more distressing reactions were related to body products, foods and hygiene.

Conclusions: We replicated the domains previously found by Haidt et al. (1994), except the area of sympathetic magic. Our data also provide support for new kinds of disgust elicitors, named socio-moral, death, and marginalization/poverty.