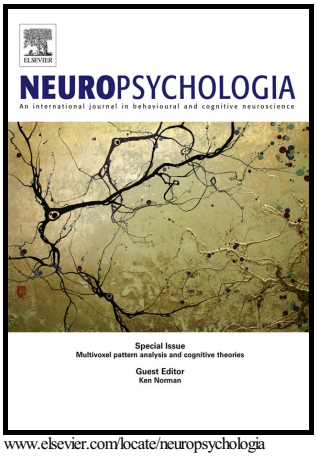

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Phasic alertness enhances processing of face and non-face stimuli in congenital prosopagnosia.

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Abstract

Congenital prosopagnosia (CP) is a severe face processing impairment that occurs in the absence of any obvious brain damage and has often been associated with a more general deficit in deriving holistic relations between facial features or even between non-face shape dimensions. Here we further characterized this deficit and examined a potential way to ameliorate it. To this end we manipulated phasic alertness using alerting cues previously shown to modulate attention and enhance global processing of visual stimuli in normal observers. Specifically, we first examined whether individuals with CP, similarly to controls, would show greater global processing when exposed to an alerting cue in the context of a non-facial task (Navon global/local task). We then explored the effect of an alerting cue on face processing (upright/inverted face discrimination). Confirming previous findings, in the absence