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Attractiveness, Odor Influences, and Context-Dependent Memory

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Poster Presentation P33

**ATTRACTIVENESS, ODOR INFLUENCES, AND
CONTEXT-DEPENDENT MEMORY**

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The current study was designed to examine the effects of odor on ratings of attractiveness and context-dependent memory. Previous research indicates that memory is better when contextual cues remain constant. There is also evidence that odors serve as contextual cues. With this in mind, students were asked to rate the attractiveness of 50 faces of anonymous college students in a classroom that smells of cigarettes (negative odor) or fresh linens (positive odor). Two weeks later students returned to the same classroom and performed a memory test for the faces previously viewed with either a context congruent smell or context incongruent smell. We hypothesized 1) ratings of attractiveness will be lower among students in a cigarette scented room as compared to previous baseline ratings of attractiveness; 2) ratings of attractiveness will be higher among students in the fresh linens scented room as compared to the students in the cigarette scented room; 3) memory for faces viewed previously will be better when tested in a context congruent environment as compared to a context incongruent environment. The results will have implications for expanding our knowledge of context-dependent memory, and more importantly whether or not the presence of cigarette odor results in decreased ratings of attractiveness.