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Talks
Social gaze I

Potential social interactions modulate social attention in dynamic scenes

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Research investigating eye gaze following using spatial cueing paradigms has lacked considerably in ecological validity. The paradigms employed to date, first use static images and, second, participants lack genuine social involvement in the task. This study sought to address this issue by showing participants videos of a social scene where two actors interacted in a waiting room whilst participants' eye movements were recorded. The actors each performed three overt head/ gaze shifts during the video. All participants were instructed that they were watching a live webcam to another room. Half the participants were told they would later perform a task with the actors in the video ("socially engaged" ; N = 20) whilst the other half were not ("non-engaged"; N = 21). Only a third of the head/gaze shifts were followed overtly by the participants, but more time was spent looking at the gazed-at side of the screen after the gaze shifts than before them, regardless of the level of social involvement. However, the socially engaged participants looked at the actors' heads for longer than the non-engaged group. These results suggest that a potential social encounter may modify attention to others but not the likelihood of following gaze.

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