

## **Alexithymia and emotion regulation: the role of executive functions and salience processing**

Alexithymia is a personality trait that reflects deficits in the cognitive-experiential, expressive, and behavioural domains of emotional response. With a prevalence of 10% in the general population, it is considered a transdiagnostic feature found in several disorders.

We already know that emotional stimuli are very relevant information for humans: they signal danger, favour escape in harmful situations, help individuals to seek help from peers, and provide information on how one may be included within a social group. More generally, the ability to process emotional information flexibly is key to emotional regulation, hence to adaptive behaviour and mental health.

What happens then when people have alexithymia characteristics?

In this internship, we offer the opportunity to examine how emotional information is processed by executive functions in alexithymia

More specifically, our project aims at (1) understanding the interactions between emotional and cognitive information processing in alexithymia (2) testing innovative cognitive techniques to remediate deficits that are observed in alexithymia. We intend to submit participants to cognitive tasks measuring their executive performance (inhibition, shifting, updating) while being presented with negative, positive and neutral stimuli of diverse intensity.

### What will I do during my research internship?

Take part in the whole process of a research project including:

- Literature review
- Elaboration of research design
- Participants recruitment and management (contact, instructions, assistance)
- Follow the experimental protocol (room preparation, task initialization, data collection)
- Data analysis
- Interpretation of the data
- Writing a research paper

### Required characteristics:

- Student in first or second year of a Master's Degree in Psychology
- Interest in cognitive psychology, especially in emotion-cognition interactions
- Basic knowledge of research methods
- Social skills (the experimenter will assist participants during the tasks)
- Basic French language skills

For more information, do not hesitate to contact Marine Mas ([marine.mas@uclouvain.be](mailto:marine.mas@uclouvain.be)) or Olivier Luminet ([Olivier.luminet@uclouvain.be](mailto:Olivier.luminet@uclouvain.be))