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# Investigating the stigmatizing gaze towards visible difference

R<sup>2</sup> Project VISHU - <https://www.researchgate.net/project/VISage-et-HUMANITE-comprendre-et-prevenir-les-difficultes-dintegration-sociale-des-personnes-atteintes-de-defiguration-faciale>

OSF - <https://doi.org/10.17605/OSF.IO/7D62M>

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## Backgrounds

The **gaze** directed towards visible facial differences (VFD) can be experienced as highly **stigmatizing** [1].

This gaze is made of a **focus** on the **VFD** combined with a **lack of attention** to the **eyes** [2].

This gaze is correlated with stigmatizing affective reactions [2,3].

### Aim

To demonstrate that the way people visually treat faces with VFD is stigmatizing because it is specific to VFD and not observed for another feature.

## Methods

### Participants

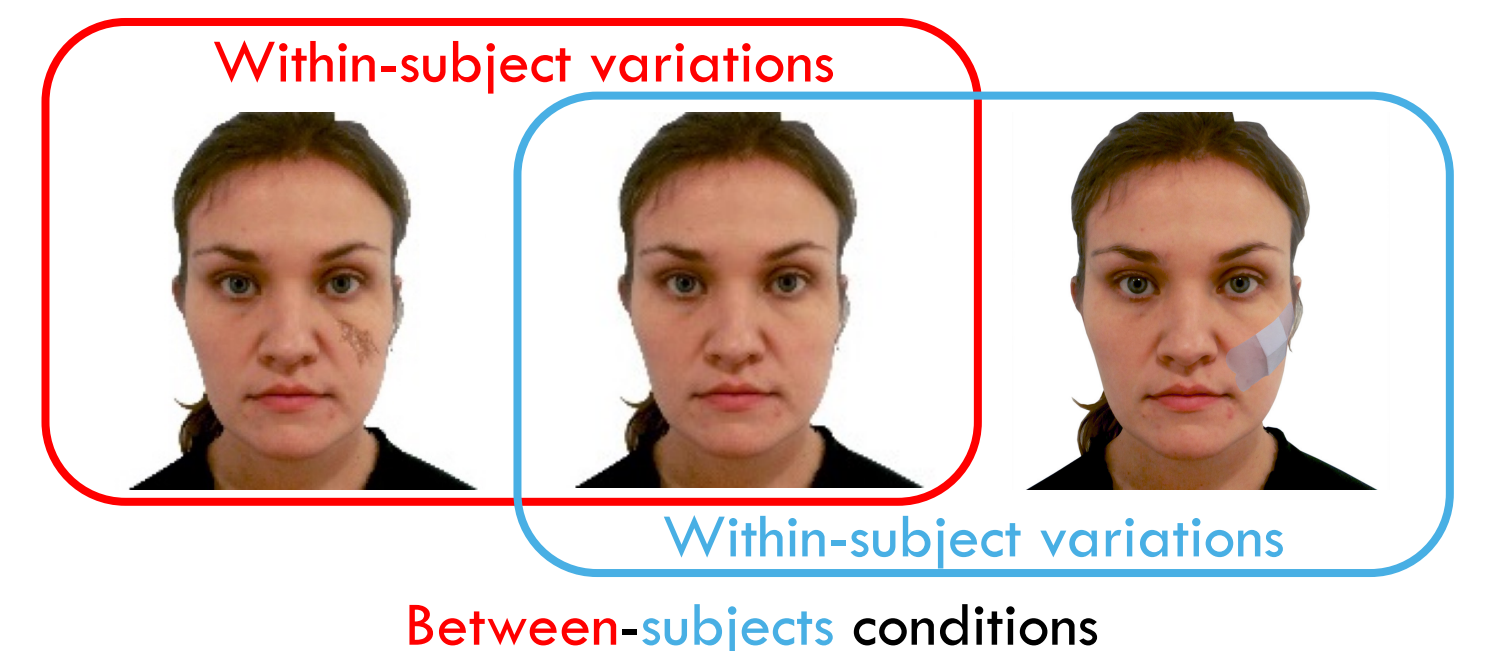
N = 164 students without VFD, Age: M = 19.70, SD = 1.92

### Stimuli

Portraits with and without a burn-like scar or a plaster on a cheek.

### Measures

Eye-tracking (Self-reported) Affective reactions

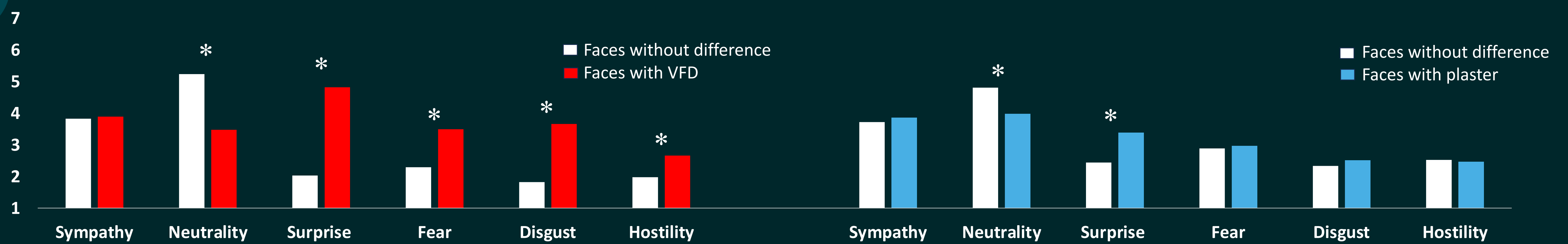


### Procedure



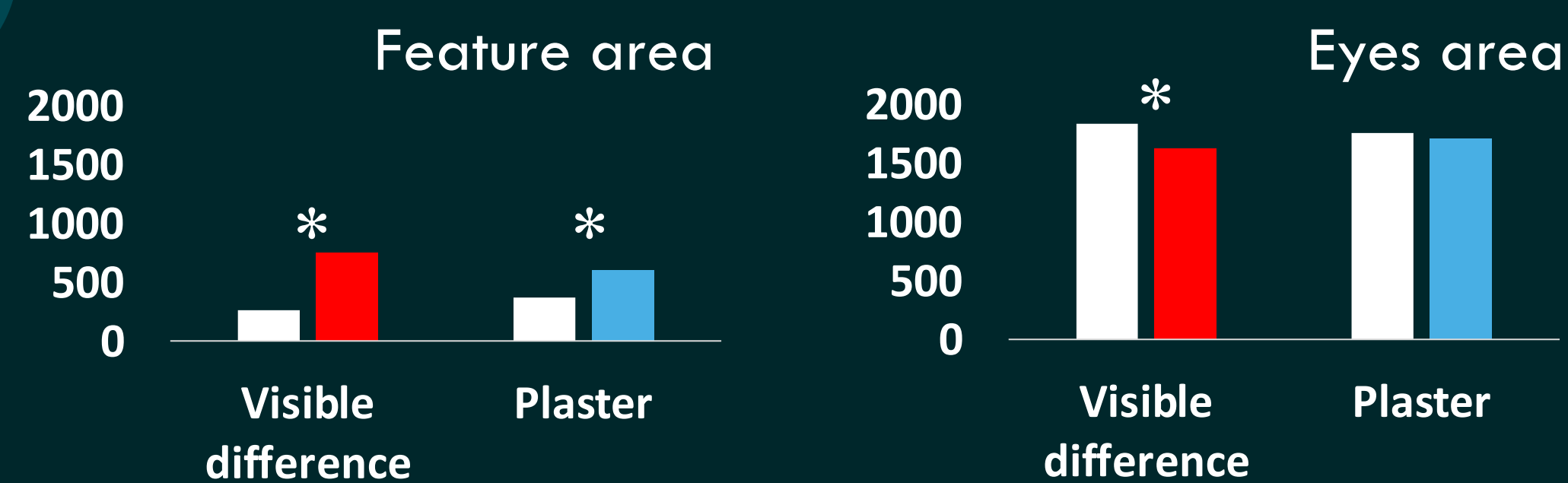
## Findings

### 1 Affects



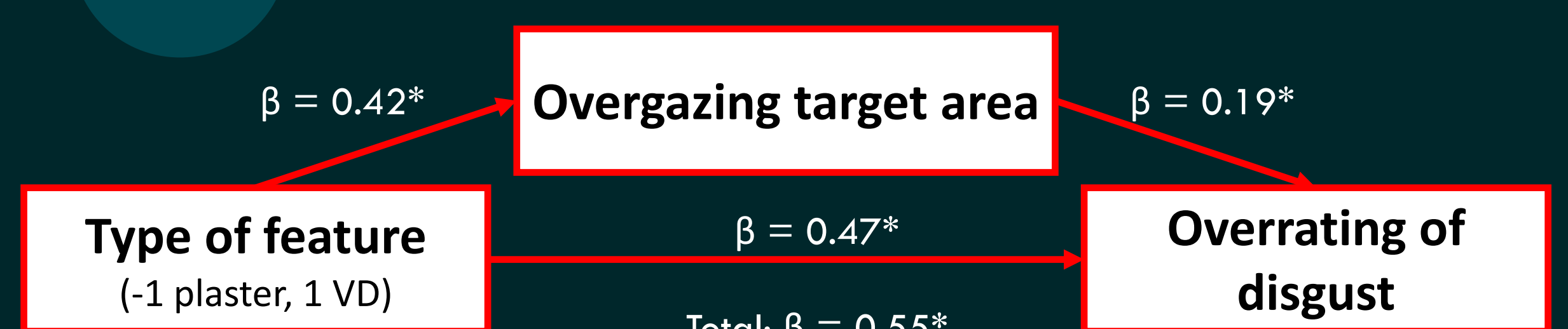
Participants reported more and stronger stigmatizing affective reactions when watching faces with VFD than faces with plaster.

### 2 Gaze



Participants gazed more at the feature area and neglected the eyes to a greater extent when the face was with VFD than plaster.

### 3 The mediating role of gaze



Gazing at VFD mediated the impact on disgust.

\* for  $p < .05$

## Discussion

Gaze towards VFD is intrinsically problematic because :

It diverges from the way faces without VFD are treated.

It is associated with stigmatizing reactions.

It is specific to VFD.

→ There is a need to reeducate the gaze towards VFD.

## References

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