

# The TV and a Cell Phone – the answer to gender brain stress



If you are a typical female and you know some typical males, both of you are likely to confirm that beyond a shadow of a doubt, based on your years of interpersonal experience with the opposite sex, there are differences between the male and female brains of the species.



Scientists and researchers on the other hand have been riding a seesaw back and forth over gender brain differences. Some want to declare each brain a separate planet while others want them viewed as being only subtle differences of expression.

Mara Mather, cognitive psychologist at the University of Southern California and her team found that **when under stress, male and female brains do show measurable differences and response behaviors** (of course that was something we knew already, but it's nice to have scientific confirmation).

The stress test divided a group with 50% of men and women having their hand placed in ice water for 3 minutes and the other 50% experiencing warm water.

The men stressed by ice water test scored lower in brain activity responsible for processing emotions and facial expressions. The women stressed by the ice water test, were twice as good as the stressed men in discerning facial expressions.

Mather and her team suspected that hormones also played a role. Both the stressed men and women were determined to be equally stressed when their cortisol levels were measured after the ice water submersion. However, the *men who registered higher testosterone levels had lower facial*

*recognition levels. Women, regardless of their estrogen level, showed no difference.*

When measured for brain activity, **stressed men had less functional connectivity** between the parts of the brain that process emotion and social response. By comparison the **stressed women had greater functional connectivity in the social/emotional areas.**

Translated this means that stressed men, especially those with high testosterone levels, are more inclined to withdraw, disengage and less accurately process emotion and facial expressions.

Stressed women are more likely to be alert to emotions and facial expressions and will reach out to their social network.

**One way to make practical use of this research** is to let men when stressed park themselves in front of the TV, until their emotional level return to normal.

For women, let them talk of their cell phones as long as needed with women who sympathize. Once the stress has been relieved, both male and female brains should be able to revert back to understanding one another.

**But, don't count on it. There is still male/female differences science has yet to formulate an experiment to explain. In the meantime, the male and female brains will continue to try to figure one another out on their own. Hopefully this little bit of research helps.**

by Joyce Hansen

Source:

<http://www.livescience.com/health/gender-brain-stress-100929.html>