

Table of Contents

Introduction and General Outline of the Thesis.....	1
Chapter I: Stress, Aggression, and Social Information Processing	5
1.1. Aggression	6
1.1.1. Definition and Classification of Aggression	6
1.1.2. A Psychosocial Approach to Aggression: the General Aggression Model.....	7
1.1.3. The Neural Circuits of Aggression: the Role of Emotion Regulation and Social Information Processing.....	9
1.2. Stress and Aggression: the Role of the HPA axis and Cortisol.....	12
1.2.1. The Role of the HPA axis in Response to Stress.....	12
1.2.2. The HPA axis and Aggression	14
1.2.3. 'The Vicious Circle of Aggression': Animal Studies on Stress and Aggression	16
1.3. Summary and Aims of the Thesis.....	18
Chapter II: Influences of Aggression on Information Processing in the Emotional Stroop Task – an Event-Related Potential Study	21
2.1. Introduction	23
2.2. Material and Methods	26
2.3. Results	32
2.4. Discussion.....	37
Chapter III: Exogenous Cortisol and Aggression Have Independent Effects on Information Processing – an ERP Study.....	43
3.1. Introduction	45
3.2. Materials and Methods	48
3.3. Results	55
3.4. Discussion.....	61

Chapter IV: Acute Experiences of Ostracism and Provocation Increase the Implicit Bias for Social Threat Information	67
4.1. Introduction	69
4.2. Materials and Methods	72
4.3. Results	77
4.4. Discussion.....	82
Chapter V: General Discussion	89
5.1. Summary of the results	90
5.2. Discussion and Integration of the Results	92
5.2.1. Stress and Aggression.....	92
5.2.2. Stress, Aggression, and Social Information Processing	93
5.2.3. Temporal Dynamics of Cortisol and Aggression Effects on Information Processing.....	95
5.3. Strengths, Limitations, and Suggestions for Future Research.....	96
5.3.1. Strengths of the Studies	96
5.3.2. Limitations.....	97
5.3.3. Suggestions for Future Research	98
5.4. Conclusion	99
References	101
List of Abbreviations	119
List of Figures	120
List of Tables	122