

## **Abstract**

Animal phobias are among the most common specific phobias. It is traditionally assumed that two basic emotions are involved – fear and anxiety, although recent studies suggest that disgust may also be important. Phobias and involved emotions are defined mostly by psychologists and psychiatrists. Their manifestations could be identified mainly on physiological level and are being researched using advanced medical methods (e.g. functional neuroimaging). The eliciting stimuli of arachnophobia, ophidiophobia etc. are specific animal, spiders or snakes. However the category of elicitors for disgust *sensu lato* is fairly extended. The etiology of these phenomena is explained from the perspective of evolutionary biology and presumes biologically significant selective pressures and common coevolution.

The aim of this paper is to summarize information gathered so far, verify proposed evolutionary hypothesis about the involvement of disgust in the etiology of animal phobia and to evaluate biological relevancy of fear of animal stimuli.