

The neuroscience of laughter

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Should we take laughter seriously?

A photograph of a man with short brown hair and glasses, wearing a dark sweater over a white collared shirt. He is laughing heartily, with his head tilted back and eyes closed. The background is a plain, light-colored wall.

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What is laughter?



We think
laughter is
about
comedy
and jokes



In nature, it's an expression of playfulness



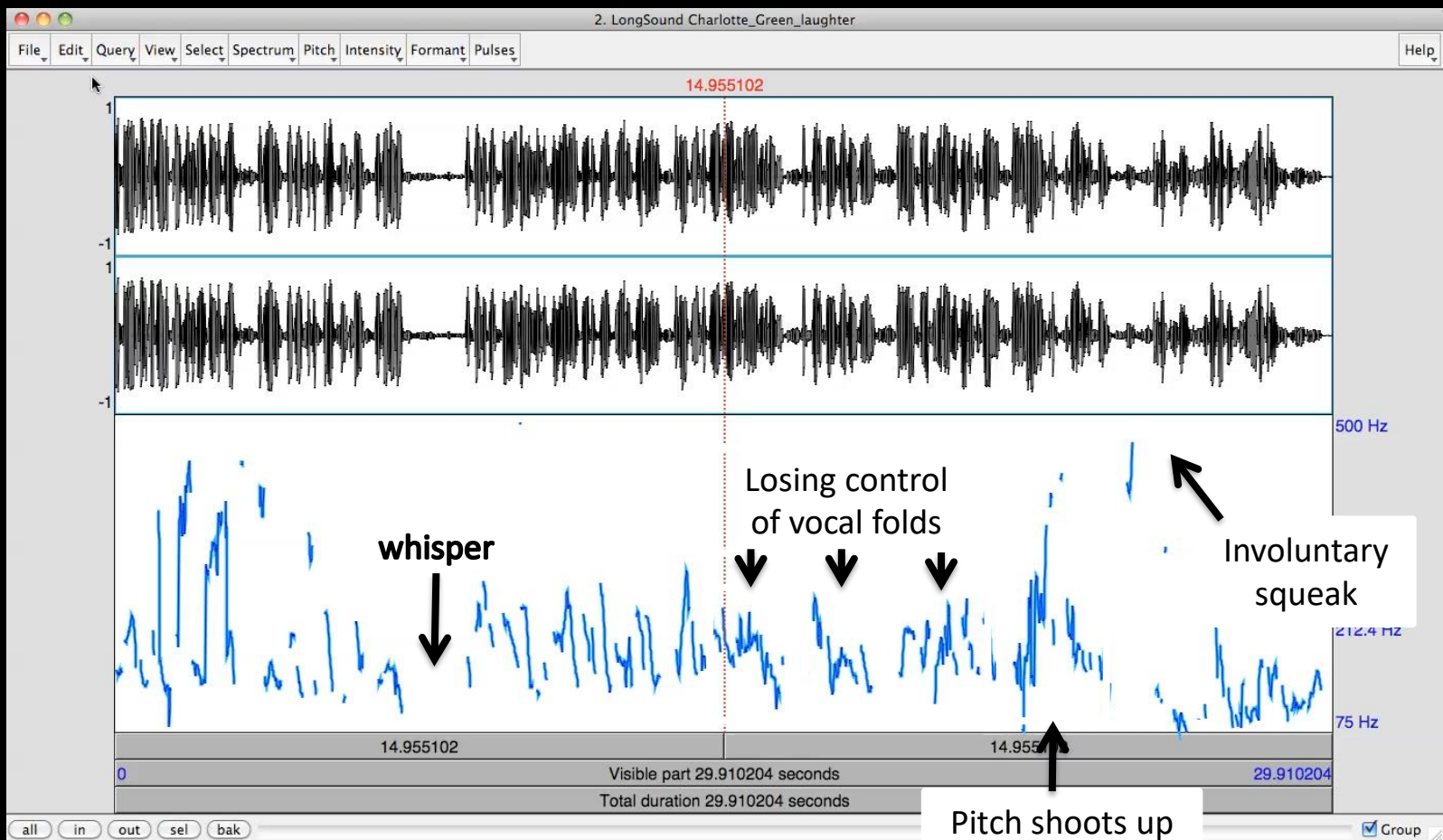
A group of diverse young women are shown laughing joyfully. The women have various ethnicities and are dressed in casual attire. The background is slightly blurred, focusing attention on the subjects. The text 'Laughter and culture' is overlaid in the center in a bright yellow font.

Laughter and culture



For humans, it's an expression of social joy





We use laughter to make and maintain social bonds



- To manage transient interactions
- To communicate in conversations

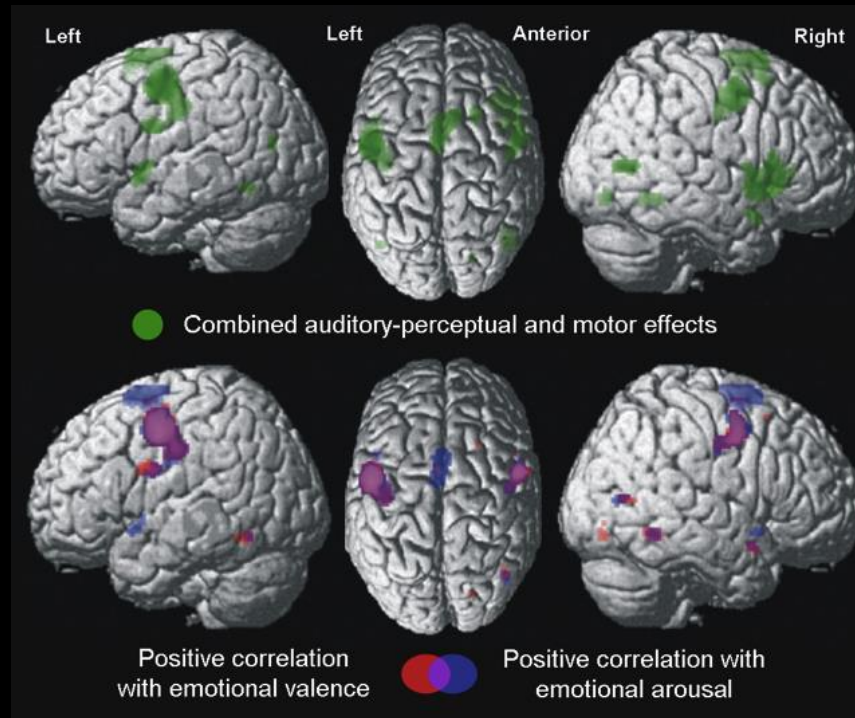
Laugh to manage stressful situations



- To show we are OK
- To manage conflict and stress

Laughter and intimacy





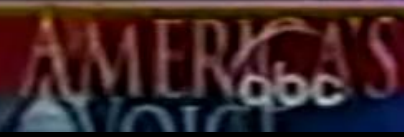
Laughter and contagion

Warren et al, 2006





Caller: DANNY
Citra, FL



Sharing laughter



Photo by Amy, Flickr

“laughter is the shortest distance
between two people” Victor Borge





Sound of friendship



Photo by Chad Nicholson, Flickr

We should take laughter more seriously



