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Remembered Dysfunctional Parenting is Linked to Increased Somatosensory Amplification

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Introduction

Somatosensory amplification, found in anxiety, depression and hypochondriasis, refers to the perception of normal somatic and visceral stimuli as being intense and disturbing. There is also some evidence that dysfunctional parental rearing styles associate with increased risk of suffering from somatic diseases and mental disorders in adulthood.

Objectives

To measure somatosensory amplification in healthy adults and assess the type of parenting they received.

Aims

To verify whether a dysfunctional parenting style, as remembered and assessed by healthy adults, is linked to increased somatosensory amplification in adult life. Given that previous evidence suggested that depression and anxiety are also linked to increased somatosensory amplification, present study also controls for those symptoms in estimating the relationship between somatosensory amplification and parenting styles.

Methods

Two-hundred and thirty subjects were randomly selected from the general Greek population and asked to complete the Hospital Anxiety and Depression Scale (HADS), the Measurement Of Parenting Style (MOPS), the Remembered Relationship with Parents (RRP) and the Somatosensory Amplification Scale (SSA).

Results

Our results showed that higher HADS scores as well as higher MOPS and RRP scores, indicative of anxiety, depression and perceived dysfunctional parenting respectively, predict a more intense somatosensory amplification. A multivariate regression model showed that increased somatosensory amplification associates best with an overcontrolling parenting style along with more anxiety, lower somatic health and lower educational status.

Conclusions

Our results show that a parenting style perceived as overcontrolling may result later, in adult life, in a more intense somatosensory amplification.