

# Does Body Awareness Mediate the Relationship Between Anxiety and Nocebo?

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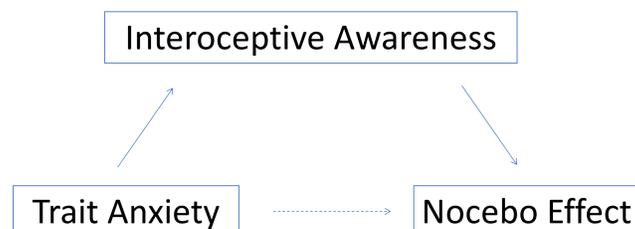
## Introduction

- The nocebo effect is defined as negative outcomes produced by negative expectations<sup>1</sup>
- People with higher rates of trait anxiety experience a larger magnitude of the nocebo effect.<sup>2</sup>
- Higher rates of anxiety are also related to a higher awareness of one's bodily functions, also known as interoceptive awareness.<sup>3,4</sup>
- There is little research looking at a potential relationship between interoceptive awareness, anxiety, and the nocebo effect.

## Research Question

Is interoceptive awareness an underlying mechanism for the relationship between anxiety and the nocebo effect?

## Hypothesis



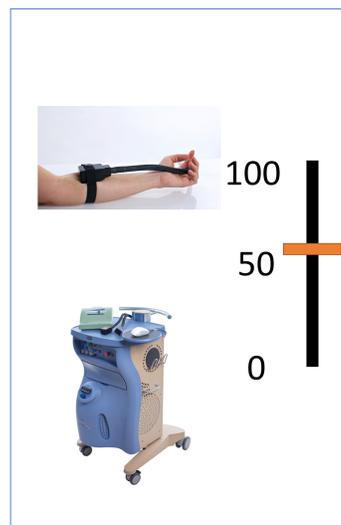
## Methods

**Participants:**  $n = 43$ , range: 13 – 40,  $M = 21$ , ( $SD = 6.52$ )

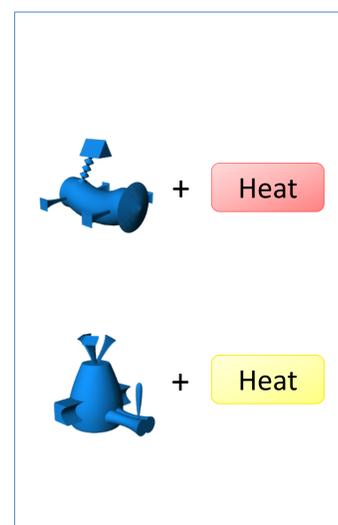
### Procedure:

1. Conditioning visual stimuli<sup>5</sup> with thermal sensations

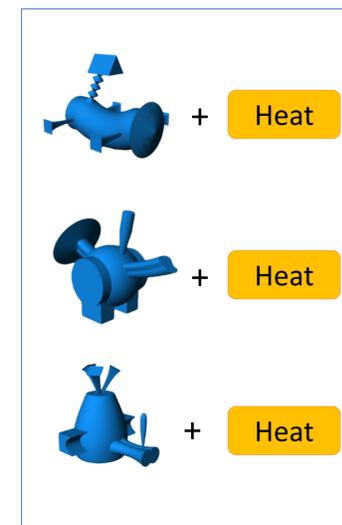
#### Calibration



#### Conditioning



#### Testing



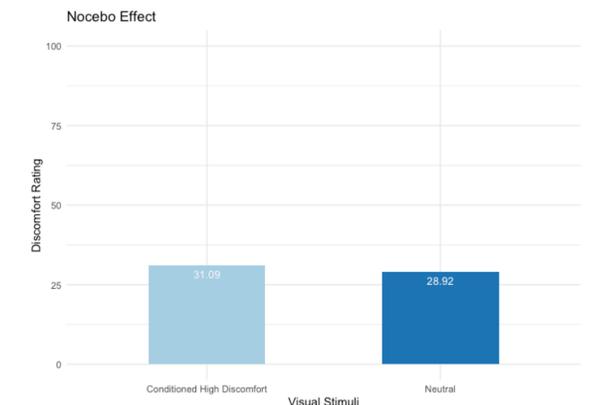
2. Questionnaires

- STAI: State Trait Anxiety Inventory
- MAIA: Multidimensional Assessment of Interoceptive Awareness

### References

<sup>1</sup>Faasse, K. Australian Psychologist (2019), <sup>2</sup>Weik et al., In review (2020), <sup>3</sup>Stewart et al., Journal of Anxiety Disorders (2001), <sup>4</sup>Pollatos et al., International Journal of Psychophysiology (2007), <sup>5</sup>Barry, T. et al. Frontiers in Psychology (2014).

## Results



- A significant nocebo effect was found ( $t(42) = 2.94$ ,  $p = .005$ ).
- There was no significant relationship between trait anxiety and nocebo ( $F(1, 41) = 0.47$ ,  $p = .498$ ,  $\beta = -0.06$ ).
- Interoceptive awareness was not significantly related to trait anxiety ( $F(1, 41) = 1.10$ ,  $p = .301$ ,  $\beta = -0.02$ ) or the nocebo effect ( $F(1, 41) = 0.58$ ,  $p = .452$ ,  $\beta = 0.51$ ).

## Conclusion

A significant nocebo effect was found. However, trait anxiety did not predict the nocebo effect. Further research is necessary to better understand the relationship between anxiety and nocebo, and if interoceptive awareness plays a part.