

The perception of emotions in individuals with medically unexplained somatic symptoms

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1) to examine emotion recognition in MUSS patients 2) To examine whether MUSS patients show differences in crying behaviour and the perception of crying

Ethical review	Approved WMO
Status	Recruiting
Health condition type	Somatic symptom and related disorders
Study type	Observational non invasive

Summary

ID

NL-OMON47556

Source

ToetsingOnline

Brief title

MUSS and the perception of emotions

Condition

- Somatic symptom and related disorders

Synonym

Medically Unexplained Somatic Symptoms

Research involving

Human

Sponsors and support

Primary sponsor: Universiteit van Tilburg

Source(s) of monetary or material Support: Ministerie van OC&W

Intervention

Keyword: abuse, crying, emotions, MUSS

Outcome measures

Primary outcome

Emotion recognition: we expect that MUSS patients show impairments in emotion recognition, as measures with the Reading the Mind in the Eyes test. We hypothesize that MUSS patients have lower RMET scores compared to control individuals.

Crying behaviour: We expect that MUSS patients cry less often than control individuals

Perception of crying: we expect that MUSS patients show less empathic responses to crying compared to control individuals

Secondary outcome

We expect that effects of group (patient, control) are moderated by childhood abuse and insecure attachment. We expect to find stronger impairments in emotion recognition/crying behaviour/crying perception in MUSS patients who report severe experiences of abuse compared to MUSS patients without experiences of childhood abuse.

Study description

Background summary

The current study aims to examine emotion recognition and the perception of crying in individuals with Medically Unexplained Somatic Symptoms (MUSS).

Individuals with MUSS lack the ability to mentalize about their feelings, which might be explained by negative childhood experiences and insecure attachment relationships. However, it is unknown whether MUSS patients also show deficits in understanding the emotions of others. The current study aims to examine the relation between MUSS and emotion recognition and the moderating role of attachment and childhood experiences.

In addition, it aims to examine the perception of crying and crying behaviour in individuals with MUSS. Tearful crying has been suggested to promote social bonding, prosocial helpful behaviour, elicit empathy and reduce tension and negative mood in the crier (Vingerhoets & Bylsma, 2016). Consequently, disturbances in crying behaviour and the perception of crying may reflect emotional problems in individuals with psychopathology. Although, studies examining the functions of crying may clarify emotional dysfunctioning in individuals with psychopathology, little research on the role of crying in clinical disorders has been conducted until now. In the current study, we aim to examine the perception of crying and crying behaviour in individuals with MUSS and the role of childhood experiences and attachment in this relation.

Study objective

1) to examine emotion recognition in MUSS patients 2) To examine whether MUSS patients show differences in crying behaviour and the perception of crying

Study design

Patients with chronic MUSS and control participants will be asked to participate in a study examining emotion recognition and the perception of tears. Participants will be asked to fill in questionnaires about childhood experiences and attachment. They will be asked to perform an emotion recognition task and evaluate pictures of adults and infants with tears on their faces and pictures with tears digitally removed. Qualtrics will be used to administer the questionnaires.

Study burden and risks

Participation in this study is without risks, total time for participation is 1 hour (2 sessions of 1/2 hour). There are no benefits for patients or control when they participate in the current study. Participants will not receive money or other rewards. There is no physical burden associated with participation. Emotional burden consists of filling in questionnaire about negative childhood experiences. Participants will be made clear that they can withdraw from participation at any time they want. They will be given contact information of

a psychologist and an (independent) psychiatrist in case they experience negative emotions after filling in the questionnaires.

There are no risk associated with participation. However, this study will increase insight into symptoms of individuals with MUSS.

Patients in search of treatment for physical complaints without a clearly defined somatic constitute a problem in primary care and comprise 15% to 30% of all primary care consultations (Escobar, Waitzkin, Silver, Gara, & Holman, 1998; Selders et al., 2015). In addition, MUSS is a major problem for patients because of the high level of experienced distress. Studies examining the functions of crying may clarify emotional dysfunctioning in individuals with MUSS, may provide more insight into the mechanism underlying their symptoms. This knowledge is needed for the development of new therapies, such as the mentalization-based Dynamic Interpersonal Therapy (DIT) (Selders et al., 2015).

Contacts

Public

Universiteit van Tilburg

Warandelaan 2
Tilburg 5037 AB
NL

Scientific

Universiteit van Tilburg

Warandelaan 2
Tilburg 5037 AB
NL

Trial sites

Listed location countries

Netherlands

Eligibility criteria

Age

Adults (18-64 years)

Elderly (65 years and older)

Inclusion criteria

Individuals with MUSS: participants (age 18 -70 years) should suffer from chronic MUSS (e.g. chronic somatic unexplained headaches, chronic fatigue syndrome, unexplained dizziness, whiplash-related complaints, fibromyalgia and irritable bowel syndrome)

Control group: men and women, age 18 - 70 years

Exclusion criteria

Individuals with MUSS: MUSS only present for a short period of time, other psychiatric disorders, age younger than 18, insufficient mastery of the Dutch language, and addiction or substance abuse., Control group: somatic symptoms or individuals with chronic pain, psychiatric disorders, age younger than 18, insufficient mastery of the Dutch language, and addiction or substance abuse.

Study design

Design

Study type:	Observational non invasive
Intervention model:	Other
Allocation:	Non-randomized controlled trial
Masking:	Open (masking not used)

Primary purpose: Other

Recruitment

NL	
Recruitment status:	Recruiting
Start date (anticipated):	01-09-2017
Enrollment:	120
Type:	Actual

Ethics review

Approved WMO

Date: 05-07-2016

Application type: First submission

Review commission: METC Brabant (Tilburg)

Approved WMO

Date: 27-02-2020

Application type: Amendment

Review commission: METC Brabant (Tilburg)

Study registrations

Followed up by the following (possibly more current) registration

No registrations found.

Other (possibly less up-to-date) registrations in this register

No registrations found.

In other registers

Register	ID
CCMO	NL57387.028.16