Affective Modulation of the Acoustic Startle Eyeblink Reflex in Fibromyalgia

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Introduction
Fibromyalgia syndrome (FMS) is typified by chronic widespread musculoskeletal pain, enhanced tenderness, and fatigue, but it is also commonly associated with affective dysfunctions. The specific etiology of FMS is unknown; however, disrupted emotional processing could contribute. Evidence suggests nociception (pain processing) is modulated by emotional processes; therefore, a disruption of emotion could chronically amplify pain. As a result, research is needed to understand whether emotional processing is impaired in FMS.

Results: Arousal Manipulation Checks

- Arousal Ratings:
  - Controls
  - FMS

Results: Valence Manipulation Checks

- Valence (Pleasure) Ratings: The content by group interaction was significant ([F(2, 36)] = 3.59, p < .05, η2 = .16)
- Planned simple effects tests of Group found that FMS participants rated attack pictures as more unpleasant than healthy control participants (p = .007)
- Preliminary results indicate that individuals with FMS have abnormalities in emotional processing.
- Given that emotion is known to influence pain modulation, these abnormalities could contribute to dysfunctional pain processing in individuals with FMS.

Conclusions

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