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Expectancies and Hypnotic Responsiveness: An Experimental-Design Flaw Revealed
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Recent research suggests that expectancies about being hypnotized have a determinant role in the hypnotic experience. The authors analyzed the relationship between expectancies and the phenomenology of hypnosis using the Phenomenology of Consciousness Inventory and Hypnotic Assessment Procedure. Participants (115) were assigned either to the imagination (hypnosis labeled as imagination) or the hypnosis conditions. Results revealed only a minor influence of expectancies and none on the label "hypnosis" across all variables. These findings indicate that the methodology commonly used to study the influence of expectancies on hypnotic responsiveness and phenomenology might represent a flaw in favor of a causal relationship between expectancies and hypnotic experience.

Pain Perception and Hypnosis: Findings From Recent Functional Neuroimaging Studies

Antonio Del Casale , Stefano Ferracuti , Chiara Rapinesi , Daniele Serata , Saverio Simone Caltagirone , Valeria Savoja , Daria Piacentino , Gemma Callovin , Giovanni Manfredi , Gabriele Sani , Georgios D. Kotzalidis , Paolo Girardi

Hypnosis modulates pain perception and tolerance by affecting cortical and subcortical activity in brain regions involved in these processes. By reviewing functional neuroimaging studies focusing on pain perception under hypnosis, the authors aimed to identify brain activation-deactivation patterns occurring in hypnosis-modulated pain conditions. Different changes in brain functionality occurred throughout all components of the pain network and other brain areas. The anterior cingulate cortex appears to be central in modulating pain circuitry activity under hypnosis. Most studies also showed that the neural functions of the prefrontal, insular, and somatosensory cortices are consistently modified during hypnosis-modulated pain conditions. Functional neuroimaging studies support the clinical use of hypnosis in the management of pain conditions.

Diurnal Variations in Hypnotic Responsiveness: Is There an Optimal Time to Be Hypnotized?

Joseph P. Green , Richard J. Smith , MaryAnn Kromer

With a sample of nearly 700 undergraduate students, the authors found support for diurnal variations in hypnotic responsiveness. Administering the Harvard Group Scale of Hypnotic Susceptibility, Form A (HGSHS:A) in the morning or evening resulted in higher average scores than from afternoon sessions. The authors replicated this finding using a second independent sample. In the primary study, participants indicated the time of day that they are most alert. Matching self-reported preferred time of the day with HGSHS:A administration time did not improve hypnotic responsiveness. Considering this as well as past research, the authors argue that mid-morning may be the optimal time to be hypnotized and afternoon the least favorable.

Paradoxical Response to an Emotional Task: Trait Characteristics and Heart-Rate Dynamics

Rita Balocchi , Maurizio Varanini , Giulia Paoletti , Giulio Mecacci , Enrica L. Santarcangelo

The present study evaluated the heart-rate dynamics of subjects reporting decreased (responders) or paradoxically increased relaxation (nonresponders) at the end of a threatening movie. Heart-rate dynamics were characterized by indices extracted through recurrence quantification analysis (RQA) and detrended fluctuation analysis (DFA). These indices were studied as a function of a few individual characteristics: hypnotizability, gender, absorption, anxiety, and the activity of the behavioral inhibition and activation systems (BIS/BAS). Results showed that (a) the subjective experience of responsiveness is associated with the activity of the behavioral inhibition system and (b) a few RQA and DFA indices are able to capture the influence of cognitive-emotional traits, including hypnotizability, on the responsiveness to the threatening task.

Are Hypnosis and Dissociation Related? New Evidence for a Connection

Jonathan M. Cleveland , Brandon M. Korman , Steven N. Gold

The authors revisit the question of the existence of a relationship between hypnotizability and dissociative capacity. In the present study, the State Scale of Dissociation (SSD) replaced the commonly employed Dissociative Experiences Scale (DES) as a measure of dissociation, due to the latter capturing primarily pathological aspects of dissociation. Relationships between the Harvard Scale of Hypnotic Susceptibility, Form A (HGSHS:A), the SSD, and the Phenomenology of Consciousness Inventory (PCI) were assessed in the context of hypnosis. Robust results were found when comparing pre- to post-SSD scores, suggesting heightened nonpathological forms of dissociation are indeed

related to hypnotizability. The appropriateness of the DES and similar trait-based measures for evaluating hypnotic phenomena is discussed as well as the relationships between PCI and SSD subscales.

Feature-Based Coding System: A New Way of Characterizing Hypnosis Styles Katalin Varga , Zoltán Kekecs

In this pilot study, the authors introduce a new system to assess hypnosis style. The Feature-Based Coding System (FBCS) comprises 24 standard individual hypnosis sessions, which were videotaped and coded according to both a previous and the new coding system. In addition, both subjects and hypnotists filled the Archaic Involvement Measure (AIM), the Phenomenology of Consciousness Inventory (PCI), and the Dyadic Interactional Harmony Questionnaire (DIH). The interrater agreement of FBCS was good and the construct Maternal-Paternal Axis had a good internal consistency ($\hat{\alpha} = .95$). Construct validity was also supported by the findings. Based on these results, a larger scale study is warranted to further establish the reliability and usefulness of this tool.

Hypnotherapy of a Pain Disorder: A Clinical Case Study Henrieta Mihaela Artimon

Hypnotherapy's effectiveness in improving and controlling chronic pain of various etiologies has been demonstrated by studies; the mechanism by which hypnosis does this is more complex than a simple induction of muscle relaxation. This study reveals, in addition to this mechanism, a deeper dimension of hypnotherapy from the vantage of a patient with a medical-surgical background, diagnosed with a pain disorder and major severe depressive disorder in addition to incurable painful symptoms, through treatment associated with hypnoanalysis. Following psychotherapy, which included some elements of cognitive-behavioral therapy, a complete remission of the anxious-depressive mood and the painful symptoms was achieved.