

PAIN ENGAGEMENT AND DISENGAGEMENT, SELF-REPORTED HEALTH AND ILLNESS BEHAVIOUR IN IRRITABLE BOWEL SYNDROME

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Introduction: Irritable Bowel Syndrome (IBS) is characterised by persistent symptoms in the absence of structural abnormality.

Objectives: To discover if people with IBS exhibit atypical patterns of attention to symbolic pain stimuli.

Aims: To investigate whether IBS is linked to enhanced engagement with pain words and slower disengagement.

Methods: Exogenous cueing was carried out with 20 IBS and 33 healthy participants. Participants responded to a dot following on the same or other side of the screen, allowing measurement of engagement and disengagement.

Results: ANCOVAs were carried out. The IBS group engaged more with Pain and Social Threat words, and had greater difficulty in disengaging from Pain but not from Social Threat (see Figures 1 and 2). Difficulty in disengaging from Pain was linked to greater symptom severity.