

Abstract

Original Article

**Symbolism of Pain: An Alternative Approach to Pain Means
between Patients and Healthy Individuals**

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Objective: The symbols of pain experience and their meanings have not been studied analytically yet. The purpose of this study was to investigate the symbolization of pain.

Methods: Two hundred and seventy-two individuals (201 healthy individuals and 71 patients with psychiatric symptoms) were enrolled in this study. All participants were asked to complete a questionnaire that included: questions for the recording of social representations of symbols based on free association methods.

Results: The preference of the association of pain with black color, red color and gray color is distinct and not appear to differ between patients and controls. The pain is related, for the group of patients, mainly to January and February, while the healthy ones seem to associate pain with almost all the months of winter and autumn. The patients often associate pain with an age of over 70 years old while healthy individuals associate pain with an age of both over 70 and 30-50 years old.

Conclusions: As expected, significant correlations among the symbolism of pain and the variables investigated in this study, such as color, age, weather condition, natural element, day of the week and month of the year, were found. Maybe the representation of pain as "a violent force" in "Ego" seems almost unaffected by the psychic condition of the individual.

Key Words: Pain, Symbolism, Representation, Psychiatric Patients, Color, Psychology