

# FROM NOVELTY SEEKING TO SELF TRASCENDENCE: REWARD DEPENDENCE MAY MAKE THE DIFFERENCE

Fiori Patrizia, Corbo Antonio, Iorillo Luigi, Giannetti Luigi Maria<sup>1</sup>, Monaco Antonio  
Neurological Unit, <sup>1</sup>Infantile Neuropsychiatry  
S. Ottone Frangipane Hospital, ASL AV – University of Naples, Ariano irpino (AV), Italy



## Introduction

Body image and temperament and character are the milestones of our fitness. Moreover, they have a pivotal role in dealing with life challenges, adapting to environmental conditions, decision making in case of stressful events, promoting self and other welfare, quiet aging. The aim of our observational study was to evaluate differences in temperament and character and dysmorphic features related to age.

## Methods

So far, we recruited 200 patients. They were ranked according to the age: 18-30 (A), 31-50 (B), 51-65 (C), >65 years (D). We administered Temperament and Character Inventory (Cloninger CR, 1987), Body Dysmorphic Disorder Examination, Brief Assessment of Negative Dysmorphic Signs (BANDS) (Fiori et al, 2009, 2010), Mini-International Neuropsychiatric Inventory, Hamilton, Cornell, Pittsburg, Hachinski scales, Mini-mental State Examination, Activity of Daily Living Questionnaire.

## Results

BANDS levels were lower in A (9,45 sd 3,22) compared to C (11,19 sd 2,29, p 0,003) and D (11,85 sd 2,72, p 0,001). Significant differences were found in novelty seeking between group A (19,42 sd 5,35) compared to B (16,97 sd 4,44, p 0,01), C (16,16 sd 4, p 0,001), D (16,69 sd 4,12, p 0,01), self transcendence between group A (16,55 sd 5,48) compared to B (19,25 sd 6,16, p 0,03), C (19,30 sd 5,56, p 0,02), D (21,36 sd 5,18, p 0,0003). Reward dependence was lower in group A (14,87 sd 3,49) compared to D (16,62 sd 2,9, p 0,02). Positive correlations were found between MMSE and reward dependence in groups B, C and D and self transcendence in D.

## Conclusions

Our study highlights a well structured body image in young subjects, especially in females. Moreover, it warns concerning dimensions of temperament and character associated with the risk of addictive behaviors, above all in young males. Dimensions of temperament, as novelty seeking (being impulsive and thrill-seeking) and reward dependence (forming attachments with others and/or being sentimental, motivated behaviors, receptivity to social support and approval) are influenced by environmental factors. This points out the effect of behavioral conditioning and the importance of educational, socio-cultural and conceptual learning, particularly when the risk of maladaptive developmental trajectories is high. A shift in the type of environmental influence (i.e. shared to non-shared) from adolescence to adulthood with regard to character is reported. It implies that therapeutical strategies directed to character development may be more successful in juvenile age (Lester N. et al, 2016). Genetic factors are mainly involved in shaping dimensions of character, as self transcendence (being intuitive, insightful, joyful, spiritual and holistic in perspective). This may be a protective trait against cognitive deterioration in aging and account for differences in compliance, brief and long term therapeutical response and clinical outcomes.



## References

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