

Study looks at effect of emotions on pain and itch intensity

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Emotions influence the experience of somatosensory sensations of both pain and itch, with negative emotions eliciting higher levels of itch and pain compared to positive emotions, according to research published online March 8 in the *British Journal of Dermatology*.

(HealthDay) -- Emotions influence the experience of somatosensory sensations of both pain and itch, with negative emotions eliciting higher levels of itch and pain compared to positive emotions, according to research published online March 8 in the *British Journal of Dermatology*.

Antoinette I.M. van Laarhoven, of Radboud University Nijmegen Medical Center in the Netherlands, and colleagues used viewing of film selections to induce negative and positive emotional states in 59 healthy women. Itch and pain were induced using somatosensory stimuli,

including electrical stimulation, histamine iontophoresis, and the cold pressor test. The women reported levels of itch and pain on a visual analog scale.

The researchers found that scores for itch and pain evoked by histamine and the cold pressor test were significantly higher in women experiencing the negative rather than the positive emotional condition. Tolerance thresholds to [electrical stimulation](#) and the cold pressor test and stimulus unpleasantness scores did not differ between the two conditions.

"These findings for the first time indicate that, in an experimental design, emotions play a role in sensitivity to somatosensory sensations of both itch and pain," the authors write.

More information: [Abstract](#)
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