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Pain and multiple facets of anger and hostility in a sample seeking treatment for problematic anger

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Abstract

A number of studies have reported associations between pain and anger in samples with chronic pain, but research has mostly overlooked associations between pain and anger in those with problematic anger. The present study explored associations between pain severity and a variety of anger and hostility constructs in a sample seeking anger treatment ($n = 131$). Zero-order correlations and partial correlations were used to examine associations between pain, anger, and hostility, controlling for depressive symptoms. Hierarchical regression models examined potential interaction effects of gender on associations between pain and these outcomes. Pain severity was positively associated with trait anger, outward anger expression, hostile interpretation bias, hostile ideation, and inability to forgive others. These associations were independent of co-occurring depressive symptoms, with some exceptions. Gender moderated the association between pain and hostile ideation such that pain was positively associated with hostile ideation in women but not men. Pain severity was uniquely associated with multiple outcomes of relevance to individuals undergoing treatment for problematic anger. Clinical implications will be discussed.

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