

## Accepted Manuscript

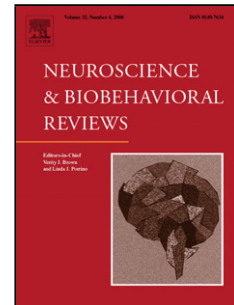
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**Highlights**

- The vicious cycle of itch and anxiety is proposed.
- Chronic itch is associated with higher levels of anxiety.
- Psychological or emotional stress aggravates itch perception.
- The central nervous system plays a major role in the itch-anxiety cycle.

**Abstract**

Chronic itch is associated with increased stress, anxiety, and other mood disorders. In turn, stress and anxiety exacerbate itch, leading to a vicious cycle that affects patient behavior (scratching) and worsens disease prognosis and quality of life. This cycle persists across chronic itch conditions of different etiologies and even to some extent in healthy individuals, suggesting that the final common pathway for itch processing (the central nervous system) plays a major role in

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