Pain Metaphors as a Bridge between Physician and Patient: An Interdisciplinary Approach

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A R T I C L E I N F O

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A B S T R A C T

With best regards
Two articles published in this journal with the titles of "Conceptual Metaphors of Pain in Persian: A Cognitive Analysis. IJMPP 2021, 6(2):496-501. [1]" and "Understanding Cancer Patients' Lived Experience of Pain through Metaphors: A Qualitative Study. IJMPP 2022; 7(3):759-764. [2]". In the first article; the author demonstrated the pain metaphors Persian speakers use for their sorts of pain and its mappings. But in the second-one , the author indicated that dedicated pain mapping that cancer patients are involved with them cognitively and live with them. According to this, they investigated pain metaphors that play an important role between physician and patient. Although these types of metaphors guide diagnosis and treatment, but. in some cases, incorrect pain metaphors distort the diagnosis and the treatment will not be effective. Therefore, more research and investigation are needed in this new interdisciplinary field of study.

Sections by Author
The author of this letter and her colleagues have designed new investigations that will complement the studies reported in this journal. These investigations are as following:
1. Design, construction and evaluation of the psychometric properties of the metaphorical perception of pain questionnaire in Persian-speaking patients with chronic diseases, which will be published in Farsi soon.
2. Designing a pain metaphor task to examine pain processing in patients with acute pain and interpret pain metaphorically.
3. Electrical brain stimulation through Transcranial Direct Current Stimulation (tDCS); to answer the fundamental question of whether this type of brain stimulation alters metaphorical interpretation in patient with sorts of pain.
4. Using brain mapping or Quantitative Electro Encephalo Graphy (QEEG) with pain metaphor tasks to investigate the electrical activity of different parts of the brain during the processing of pain metaphors.
5. Since pain affects the quality of human life [3], and quality of life and all its subscales are metaphorical [4]; The answer to this basic question via a study becomes necessary: do changes in the expression of pain metaphors change the metaphors related to the quality of life?

Conclusion

Based on the research conducted and the background literature, it can be concluded that pain metaphors can help diagnose the disease and play an essential role in the relationship between the physician and patient. In other words, they are a basic bridge and subconscious level of the physician and patient contact or relationship. Although pain metaphors have cultural roots, but with the help of psychometric science and techniques in this field, which is a new trend and has been done in some conceptual domains such as understanding time [5], it is possible to design scales and tasks in the future with interdisciplinary approaches helped to diagnose and relieve the pain of patients. It is also necessary to investigate this issue in future studies from the metaphors of the conceptual domains of health and psychology in relation to the metaphor of pain, in order to determine how the metaphors of different semantic domains overlap and relate to each other. Since there is brain evidence for understanding metaphors, and because of the abstract nature of metaphors, it involves higher level processing of the brain, i.e. executive functions and prefrontal lobe, examining the brain areas involved in the metaphorical processing of pain should also be considered. On the other hand, research evidence has shown that the invasive meth-od of tDCS is effective in reducing pain, so the question arose for the researcher, what effect this type of brain stimulation have on the processing of pain metaphors. These procedure comprise psychological, cognitive, neuroscience and cognitive principles to clarify main hypotheses in pain metaphor understanding in Persian speakers.

The author this letter has stated her purposes and future studies as an expert in the semantic domain of pain metaphors in this letter, so that other researchers can get to know more about her study trend.

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