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Connecting Interoception and Boredom Proneness: A Novel Finding

Previous research has shown that boredom proneness is associated with low levels of self-control and alexithymia (difficulty identifying one's affective state). Here we explored the relation between boredom proneness and interoception using a range of self-reported surveys. Measures of interoceptive awareness and accuracy included the Self-Awareness Questionnaire, the Multidimensional Assessment of Interoceptive Awareness (MAIA-2), the Interoceptive Sensory Questionnaire, Interoceptive Accuracy Scale, and the Body Awareness Questionnaire. We also measured boredom proneness, trait level self-control and alexithymia. A total of 319 participants completed the surveys with results demonstrating strong, positive correlations between boredom proneness and self-awareness ($r = 0.827$, $p < .001$), and interoceptive processing ($r = 0.767$, $p < .001$). Further, boredom proneness was moderately correlated with awareness of one's bodily states ($r = 0.497$, $p < .001$) and interoceptive accuracy ($r = 0.375$, $p < .001$). The relation between boredom proneness and accuracy was significantly smaller than the relation between boredom proneness and awareness of one's interoceptive states. This suggests that while boredom prone individuals may attend inordinately to their internal states, they may have weaker capacity to accurately represent those states (although direct tests of interoceptive accuracy will need to be conducted to test this idea). A restricted ability to accurately represent bodily sensations could explain in part the inability to predict which activity would be most likely to attenuate boredom; thereby perpetuating the experience. Since boredom proneness is associated with maladaptive behaviours and important mental health issues such as depression, further research is needed to better understand the role played by interoception in the experience of boredom, particularly for those high in boredom proneness.