Body Image and Chronic Pain (Megan Purser, BS)

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1. The purpose of this study is to examine whether individuals with chronic pain are more susceptible to the body image distortions than those without chronic pain, and if there is a difference in the susceptibility of the body image distortions between patients of varying levels of chronic pain. Participants will consist of volunteers from Texas State University as well as volunteers from Restore FX in Austin, Texas. Volunteers must be 18 years of age or older. Since individuals at Texas State University and Restore FX are very diverse with regard to age and ethnicity, a wide range of participants is expected.

2. Chronic pain patients will be recruited from Restore FX upon admission to the Restore FX program, and age- and education-matched controls without chronic pain from Texas State University will be recruited from the Non-Traditional Student Organization (NTSO) through announcements, flyers, and word-of-mouth. Those individuals interested will be informed about the study as to what procedures and variables will be measured. Once they agree to participate, informed consent will be obtained (see attached consent form for details). Two copies of the consent form will be made: one for the participant and the other to be kept in locked file in the Health Psychophysiology Lab in the Department of Psychology (PSY 314). Patients from Restore FX will be recruited on a volunteer basis, and students from Texas State University will be compensated $10 for their participation.

3. Participant will be briefed thoroughly prior to onset of data collection in order to protect individuals and minimize risks. The procedures and methods will be clearly explained to each individual so that they can make an educated decision with regard to participation in the study. Each participant will be assigned a unique alpha-numeric code in order to protect their confidentiality. The key to this code will be kept in a locked file separate from the consent forms. Only the primary investigator (Megan Purser) will have access. If mentioned in the documentation of the study, participants will only be identified by their alpha-numeric code. Identifiable information such as social security number, address, telephone number or any other identifying information will not be obtained. Data will be kept in a locked file in the Health Psychophysiology lab for three years, after which time it will be destroyed.

   After being briefed on the procedure and signing the consent form, participants will complete the Demographic Information questionnaire, the Short-Form McGill Pain Questionnaire and the Body Image Questionnaire (see Appendices). The rubber hand illusion will then be conducted on the participants. The steps for conducting the rubber hand illusion are as follows. Participants will be seated with their right arm resting upon a table. A standing screen will be positioned beside their arm to hide it from view, and a life sized prosthetic right hand will be placed on the table in front of the participant where their right hand would be. Their left hand will also be on the table in the participant's view. The participant will then sit with their eyes fixed on the artificial hand while the experimenter simultaneously strokes the prosthetic right hand and the participant's hidden right hand with clean paintbrushes. After ten minutes, participants will complete the Rubber Hand Illusion Questionnaire, asking them about their sensations and

perceptions during the procedure. This survey consists of 27 items that assess the strength of the illusion with regard to embodiment of the rubber hand, loss of own hand, movement, and affect. See Appendix for a copy of proposed questionnaire materials.

4. In my opinion, the risks associated with this study are negligible. There are minimal physical risks involved in this study. For example, one psychological risk involved in this study is boredom. Other risks may include psychological discomfort in answering questions on body image. Examples of questions include: are you satisfied with the shape of your body, are you confident with your body, are you concerned with your weight, and are you discontent or ashamed of your body. If at any moment you become too psychologically distressed, the study will stop.The rubber hand illusion and testing should take no more than thirty minutes. In order to alleviate boredom, breaks will be offered to participants. It is not expected that any of the survey items will cause psychological distress. Participants will be told that they can skip any items that they would prefer not to answer. However, in cases of extreme distress, patients at Restore FX will be sent to their therapist, who will be at the clinic, and students at Texas State University will be given the name, directions, and telephone number of counseling services provided at Texas State University.

5. In order to minimize risk (boredom), participant's will fully briefed prior to commencement of data collection and be offered breaks during the experiment. The procedures will be described to participants fully so that they can make an informed decision regarding their involvement in the experiment. In order to protect against confidentiality, participants will be given an alpha-numeric code. This key will be kept in a locked file that only the primary investigator (Megan Purser) has access. If participants are mentioned, they will be identified by this code. Social security number, address, telephone number or any other personal identifiers will be obtained.

6. There are few direct benefits for participants in this study. Participants will gain exposure to the experimental methods that are commonly used in psychological research. It will also provide them with the satisfaction that they are contributing to the scientific understanding of chronic pain. The research will contribute important information on variables that influence chronic pain. Specifically, body image distortions will be assessed to determine if they play a role in the development or maintenance of chronic pain. The differences in susceptibility to the rubber hand illusion will determine whether body image distortions play a role in chronic pain. These results will enrich our understanding of chronic pain.

7. No compensation will be offered to patients at Restore FX. However, information about chronic pain and body image distortions will be given to interested participants. Participants from Texas State University compensated $10 for their participation. The ten dollars is not contingent on whether they finish the survey and illusion, but serves as a incentive to recruit nontraditional students.

8. There are no known risks for experiencing the rubber hand illusion, and for filling out questionnaires, except boredom. Participants will be offered frequent breaks to guard against this possibility. In my opinion, given the potential benefits of this research (to inform our understanding of chronic pain), they far outweigh the risks.

9. The research will be conducted at Restore FX and Texas State University. Approval from Restore FX, as well as a letter of support, has already been obtained. See Appendix materials for a copy of support letters.

10. I am a student in the Clinical Health Psychology Masters program at Texas State University. This research is being conducted as a Masters thesis project for partial fulfillment of the degree of Masters in Health Psychology offered by the department of Psychology, Texas State University. Reiko Graham is the supervising faculty member. This research has relevance to my program of study because of the health risks associated with chronic pain and the necessity of a better understanding of chronic pain. Pain currently the most common reason for seeking medical care, accounting for 80% of all physician visits. The annual cost of care for chronic pain is between 65 to 70 billion dollars for treatment. For these reasons, it is crucial that a deeper understanding of chronic pain is obtained in order to aid treatment and prevent chronic pain in the future.

11. This study is for my Masters Thesis. A letter of approval by my chair, Dr. Reiko Graham, is attached.

12. The project has not been received for prior review by this or any other Institutional Review Board.

13. My thesis committee for this project will have access to all data records except participant's confidential documents, which will only be assessed by the primary investigator (Megan Purser). My thesis committee is made up of the following individuals:

    - Dr. Reiko Graham (Thesis Chair and professor at Texas State University
    - Dr. Joe Etherton (Professor at Texas State University)
    - Dr. Krista Jordan (Program Director at Restore FX)