

Hormonal profile in response to an emotion induction task in perpetrators of intimate partner violence

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The current study investigates possible hormonal markers associated with criminogenic factors in Intimate Partner Violence (IPV) perpetration. Empathy deficits have been proposed to be important for IPV perpetration and maintenance. Alterations understanding partner's thoughts and feelings might prone to IPV by promoting affective distress dealing with emotional conflicts. Notably, IPV perpetrators have shown a differential change in specific salivary hormones such as Oxytocin (sOXT), Testosterone (sT), and Cortisol (sC), following empathic induction and social stress tasks in comparison with non-violent men. However, the influence of empathic deficits in above-mentioned hormones following an emotion-induction task in IPV perpetrators remains unclear.

For this purpose, we analysed the effects of an empathic induction task, mainly based on emotion-eliciting videos, in endogenous salivary sOXT, sT and sC levels, as well as their hormonal ratios in IPV perpetrators (n=12) compared to controls (n=12). Additionally, we explored the predictive capacity of empathy-related functions (measured with Interpersonal Reactivity Index) in the hormonal responses to the task.

IPV perpetrators exhibited lower scores in IRI perspective taking than controls. Regarding independent hormones, IPV perpetrators had lower sOXT changes in their levels as well as higher total sT levels in response to the empathic induction task than controls. For hormonal ratios, IPV perpetrators presented lower sOXT/T change and levels in response to this task and higher total levels of sT/C.

Furthermore, the higher the perspective taking scores, the higher the sOXT increases as well as levels and the lower sT changes after the empathic induction task, being this association equal for both groups.

Additionally, perspective taking also predicted higher sOXT/T changes in response to the task, along with lower total levels of sT/C.

Importance of Research: To prevent IPV, a growing number of studies have focused on IPV perpetrators profile, identifying various characteristics relevant to IPV severity and recidivism. However, it has been highlighted the need to approach IPV from a multidimensional biopsychosocial framework, bringing together the psychosocial factors of IPV with biological markers that provide data less susceptible to bias and manipulation than self-reported questionnaires

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Biography

Luis Moya Albiol is Full Professor of the Department of Psychobiology in the University of Valencia (Spain). His PhD in Psychology and Neurosciences was qualified of cum laude and awarded due to its exceptionality. He is the director of the first world Master in Neurocriminology and teaches in both Psychology and Criminology graduate and postgraduate studies. He is the main researcher of a scientific team focused of Social Neuroscience, concretely in subjects as social stress, violence, cooperation and empathy. He has published more than 200 papers in reputed journals, together with several scientific and informative books. He is very involved in both the transfer and the exchange of knowledge, which is why he has promoted agreements and collaborations with associations, companies and other universities. It is also distinguished by its contribution to the dissemination of science in television, radio, specialized magazines and the press.

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