Objectives: To estimate the prevalence of health anxiety in ophthalmologists practicing in India during the ongoing pandemic.
Methods: A questionnaire-based online survey on the "changes and challenges during COVID-19" using Google forms was sent to all members of the All India Ophthalmological Society. Besides demographics, the survey had questions to assess the general mental and medical health status of the ophthalmologists. Short Health Anxiety Inventory (SHAI) was used to assess health anxiety.
Results: 1027 ophthalmologists responded to the study. Higher stress was experience by 83.1% compared to pre-COVID while examining patients closely (35.9%) or during surgery due to the risk of aerosol generation (29.3%). SHAI score >20 was observed in 5.6%. Only emergency services were being provided by 50% and 17% in the SHAI > 20 group were not working as compared to overall 14%.
Conclusions: Our findings indicate that a majority of the ophthalmologists were under stress during the COVID-19 pandemic but only a small proportion experienced health anxiety. It is likely that mental health issues may arise among ophthalmologists in the foreseeable future.

Keywords: prevalence; Covid; health anxiety; Ophthalmologists

EPP0023

Anxiety in heart failure patients and its association with NYHA class

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Introduction: Heart failure (HF) is a worldwide public health problem and the main cause of morbidity and mortality in older people. Previous studies have demonstrated that psychological symptoms are associated with worse cardiovascular outcomes. Nevertheless, the research regarding the association between anxiety and HF is still scarce.
Objectives: To analyse the levels of anxiety in HF patients and its association with New York Heart Association (NYHA) class in HF patients.
Methods: This study takes part of a wider project named Deus Ex-Machina project (NORTE-01-0145-FEDER-00026). HF patients were recruited from an outpatient clinic at a University Hospital. Patient with inability to communicate, with severe visual impairment or with NYHA class IV were excluded. Sociodemographic data and NYHA class were recorded. Anxiety was assessed using the Generalized Anxiety Disorder-7 (GAD-7).
Results: Overall, 136 patients were included, with a mean age of 57(±13) years old. Most of them were men (66%) and married (76%), with mean education of 8 years (±4). Regarding NYHA class, 36%, 49% and 15% were at class I, II and III, respectively. The mean GAD-7 total score was 6.4 (±5.2) and 32% of patients showed moderate to severe anxiety symptoms. No association between the NYHA functional class and anxiety was found (p=0.106).
Conclusions: The results reveal that anxiety is frequent among HF patients. However, as found in previous studies, it was not associated with more severe HF symptoms. The coexistence of HF and anxiety deserves further studies, in order to build a better understanding of this association.

Keywords: Anxiety; heart failure; NYHA class

EPP0024

Event-related potentials in a human serial conditioning paradigm

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Introduction: In a serial compound conditioning paradigm, a sequence of several conditioned stimuli (CS) is predictive to an unconditioned stimulus (US) (e.g., CSA->CSB->US). Animal research showed that, when the US is aversive, CSA elicits the strongest conditioned response, while CSB appears redundant. These effects of primacy and proximity have never been investigated in humans.
Objectives: To study the effects of temporal proximity of imminent threat and safety in serial compound conditioning.
Methods: Twenty-two participants were presented with sequences [CSA->CSB->CSC->CSD]. In 55 trials all four CS were identical vowels (e.g, [oh]), and no US was presented. In the other 55 trials, the CSA was different (CSA+, e.g., [uh]), and the CSD was followed by an electrical shock (US) 2.5 times higher than the individual pain threshold.
Results: No ERP component distinguished between CS- and CS+ for the first three stimuli in the sequence (i.e., CSA, CSB, CSC). The last CS (CSD) elicited a strong fronto-central CNV only when it was followed by US. Moreover, already after the CSA- (which signalized that no shock would be presented on that trial) the power of alpha oscillations over the somatosensory cortex significantly increased, particularly on the side contralateral to the hand that was electrically stimulated on US trials. The alpha increment lasted up to the onset of the US.
Conclusions: The data indicate two possible mechanisms of adjustment to predictable threat, one of which relies on safety signals (manifested in alpha increment), and the other is related to flight response (manifested in the CNV immediately preceding the shock).

Keywords: ERP; Fear conditioning; EEG

EPP0025

Anxiety, depression and HIV in older gay and bisexual men

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