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### Understanding Illness Encouragement and Pain Acceptance in Pediatric Patients with Abdominal Pain

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# Understanding Illness Encouragement and Pain Acceptance in Pediatric Patients with Abdominal Pain

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### Introduction

- Prevalence of pediatric chronic abdominal pain is 13.50%<sup>1</sup>
- Poorer outcomes are associated with parental illness encouragement behaviors (IEB)<sup>2</sup>
- IEB may predict how patients engage in valued activities (activity engagement; AE) and prioritize controlling their pain (pain willingness; PW)<sup>3</sup>
- Pain itself predicts negative beliefs about pain<sup>4</sup>

### Aims

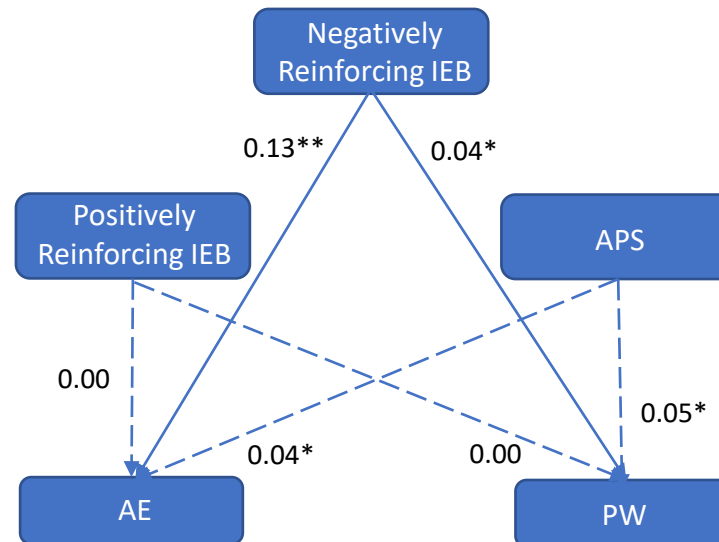
- **Aim 1** Examine the amount of variability in AE and PW explained by positively reinforcing IEB
- **Aim 2** Examine how negatively reinforcing IEB interacts with abdominal pain severity (APS) to predict AE and PW

### Methods

- Participants were 119 patients meeting criteria for a Rome IV functional gastrointestinal disorder
- Outcome measures completed:
  - Illness Behavior Encouragement Scale
  - Abdominal Pain Index
  - The Chronic Pain Acceptance Questionnaire-Adolescent Version

### Results

- **Aim 1**
  - Negatively reinforcing IEB negatively predicted both AE,  $F(1, 117) = 18.22, p < .001$ , and PW,  $F(1, 117) = 4.50, p = .04$
- **Aim 2**
  - APS negatively predicted AE,  $F(1, 117) = 6.65, p = .01$ , and PW,  $F(1, 117) = 7.86, p = .006$
  - APS and negatively reinforcing IEB did not interact to predict AE,  $b = 0.17, t = 0.58, p = .56$ , or PW,  $b = -0.15, t = -0.62, p = 0.54$



Dotted lines indicate variance predicted after accounting for Negatively Reinforcing IEB; \* $p < .05$ ; \*\* $p < .001$

### Results

| Demographic Variable                                   | Mean $\pm$ SD or % |
|--|--------------------|
| Age  | 13.95 $\pm$ 2.64   |
| Race (White)   | 86.60              |
| Gender (Female)  | 72.30              |
| Ethnicity (not of Hispanic, Latino, or Spanish origin) | 95.00              |

### Discussion

- Positively reinforcing IEB did not explain significant variance in AE or PW
- Greater negatively reinforcing IEB and APS predicted lower AE and PW
- Parental IEB should be monitored and a quick return to functioning should be encouraged
- Future work should examine how these variables interact to predict other aspects of functioning

### References

<sup>1</sup>Korterink 2015 *PLoS One* **10**: e0126982; <sup>2</sup>Walker 1992 *J Pediatr Psychol* **17**: 49; <sup>3</sup>McCracken 2010 *Eur J Pain* **14**: 316; <sup>4</sup>Crombez 2013 *J Behav Med* **36**: 371