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Nocebo hyperalgesia and pain progression: prediction, acquisition, and recovery

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Propositions accompanying the dissertation

**Nocebo hyperalgesia and pain progression:
Prediction, acquisition, and recovery**

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1. Our previous treatment experiences influence our current pain expectancies.
2. Nocebo hyperalgesia, which refers to increased pain sensitivity due to negative expectancies of adverse treatment outcomes, can occur not only in patients but also in healthy individuals.
3. Patients with fibromyalgia are not at a higher risk of acquiring nocebo hyperalgesia compared to healthy individuals (*this dissertation*).
4. While established methods exist for inducing nocebo hyperalgesia inside controlled lab settings, it is essential to develop ecologically-valid methods that mirror real-world treatment situations.
5. Experimentally-induced nocebo hyperalgesia, serving as a proxy for learned pain expectancies, does not predict daily pain levels experienced by patients with fibromyalgia (*this dissertation*).
6. Optimism and anxiety are predictive factors for both the acquisition and recovery of nocebo hyperalgesia in healthy participants (*this dissertation*).
7. Individuals experiencing stronger nocebo effects also demonstrate greater reduction of these effects, suggesting that nocebo effects can be harnessed rather than feared (*this dissertation*).
8. Openly informing individuals that a (sham) treatment increases pain, coupled with experiencing heightened pain, induces nocebo hyperalgesia. Conversely, openly disclosing that a (sham) treatment decreases pain, along with experiencing lowered pain, reduces nocebo hyperalgesia (*this dissertation*).
9. Honest prescription of placebos could serve as a complimentary treatment approach in the future. Furthermore, openly disclosing the pain-reducing properties of such placebos could be promising in minimizing nocebo effects.
10. So far, we have only scratched the surface of nocebo effects; research in clinical directions may provide deeper insights into how nocebo effects arise, persist, and reduce in practice.
11. Your expectations influence your reality: Always look on the bright side of life!