

Abstract

Somatization, which is prevalent in primary medicine with unknown etiology and is challenging to treat, has been considered to be physical experience and communication of psychological distress resulting from affect dysregulation. The current research hoped to add to the understanding of affect regulation in somatising individuals through the relationship between somatization and vagally mediated heart rate variability (vmHRV), a non-invasive physiobiological marker of regulated emotional responding on momentary basis. vmHRV data were collected across three phases, including the resting phase, the stress phase when physical pain was induced by a cold pressor task, and the recovery phase, among of sample of 77 normal university students. Somatization was assessed by self-reported somatic symptom attributional style. HF-HRV, a frequency-domain measure, was taken to index vmHRV or vagal/parasympathetic activity. Correlative analyses showed that the resting vmHRV, vmHRV reactivity, and vmHRV recovery, were all not associated with a tendency to attribute somatic symptoms to causes related to physical illnesses, which is inconsistent with the hypotheses and results of previous studies.