Who Does Social Distancing?



Interactions between the Behavioral Immune System, Dark Triad, and HEXACO Traits

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This poster presents preliminary findings from an ongoing, larger-scale project.



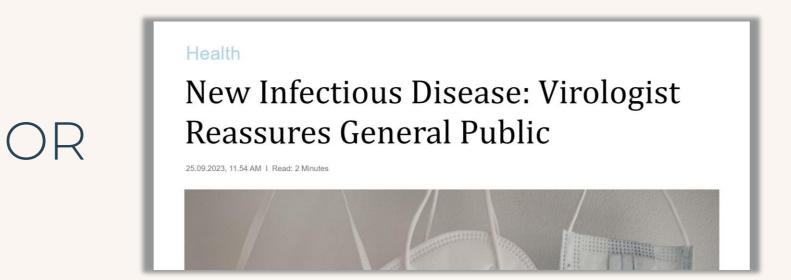
Introduction

Functional flexibility is a key factor of the Behavioral Immune System as an adaptive threat management system^[1]. In times of high pathogen stress, behaviors that protect the individual but conflict with human desires (e.g., social distancing) should be encouraged^[2]. If behavioral changes are a consequence of functional flexbility, shortterm changes in the self-perception of personality traits could mediate this conflict. Previous studies^[3-5] have found inconsistent changes in personality measures, while avoidance behaviors consistently increased. The level and manipulation of pathogen stress, however, was different for all previous studies.

Aim: Compare changes in self-perception of personality traits and behavior at different levels of pathogen stress.



High Pathogen Threat



Low Pathogen Threat/Safety



Neutral Traffic Threat

Measures at T1&T2

- HEXACO
- Dark Triad
- Longing for
- Interpersonal Touch
- Future Health Behaviors

Preliminary Results

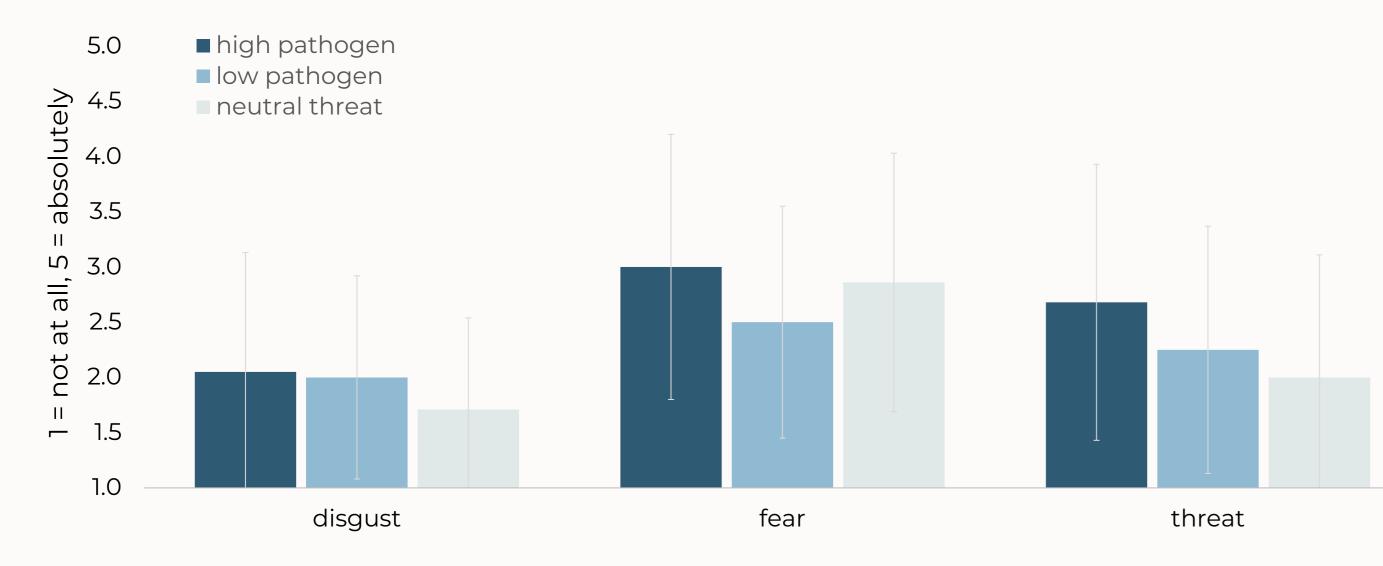
N = 53

$$n_{high}$$
 = 19, n_{low} = 20, $n_{neutral}$ = 14

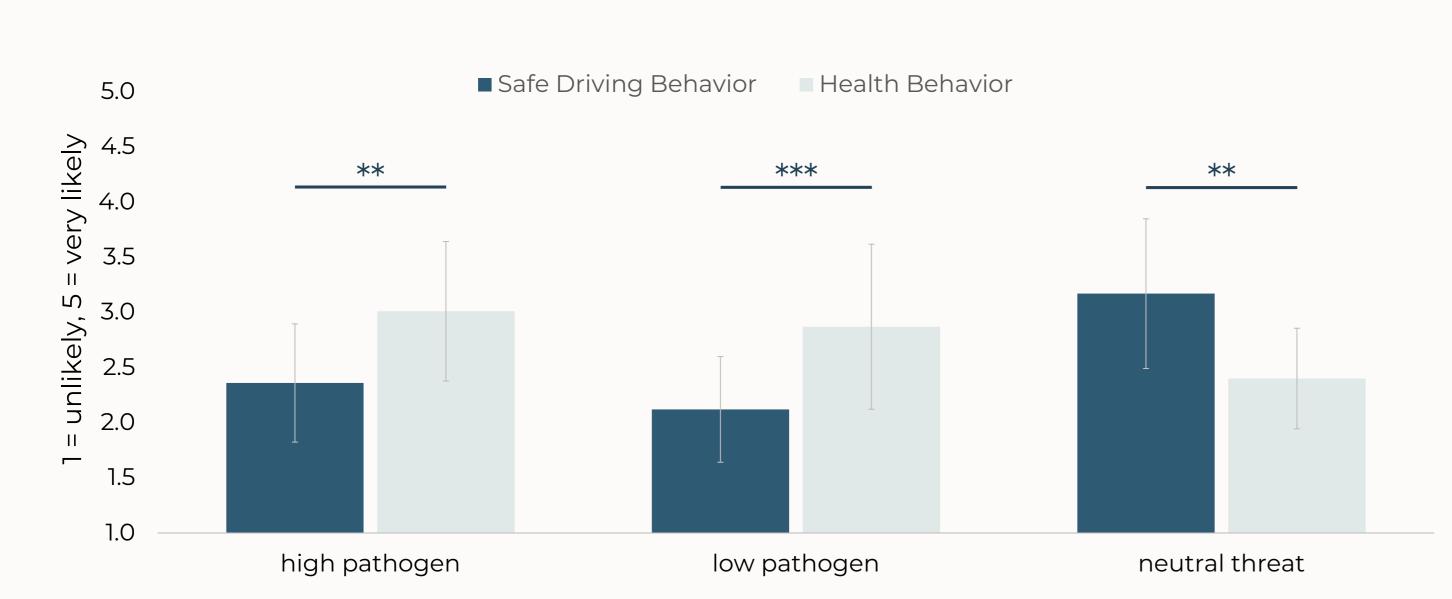
19 - 71 years old (M = 33.98, SD = 12.30)

OR

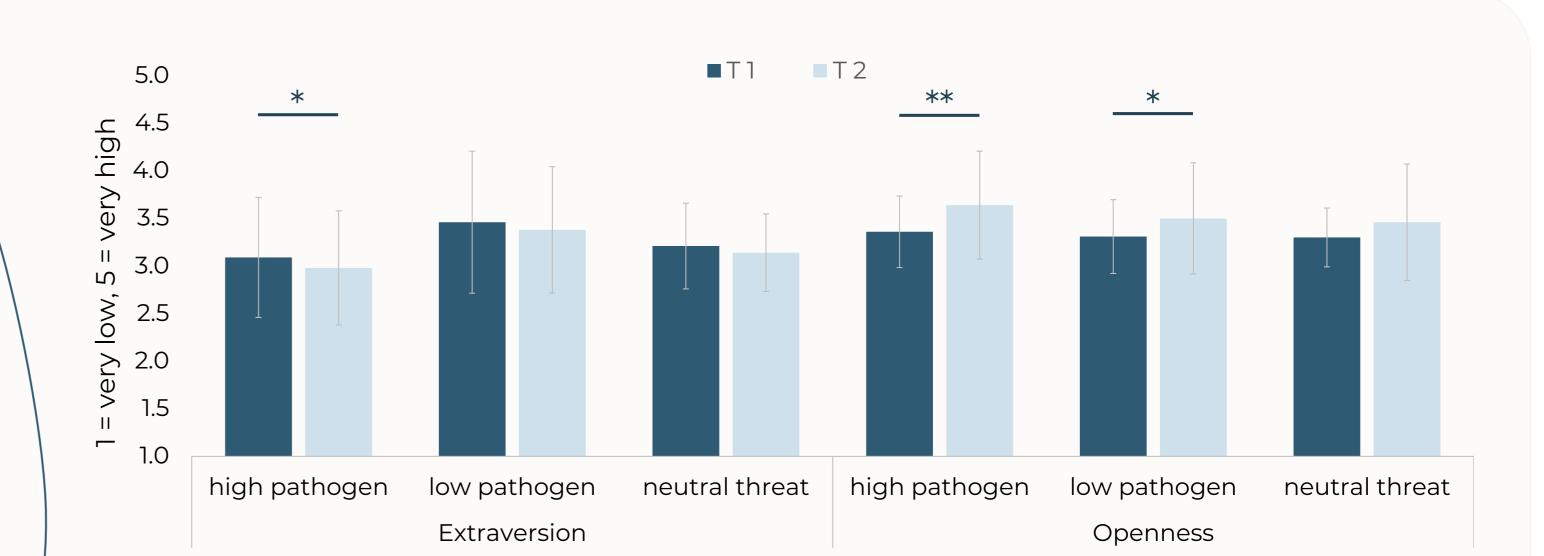
9 = 38, 0 = 15



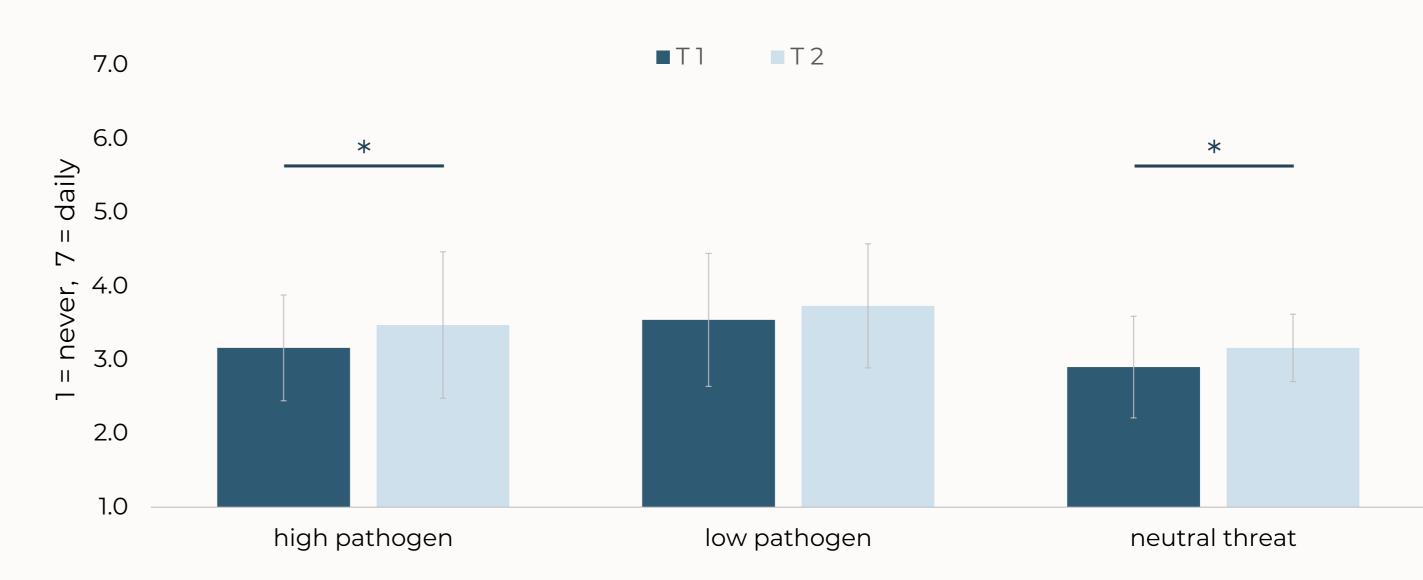
Trend toward expected emotional reactions to the articles.



Pathogen threat increased Future Health Behaviors, traffic threat increased Future Driving Behaviors.



Under (high) pathogen stress, self-perception of Extraversion decreased but that of Openness increased.



Longing for Interpersonal Touch increased in high threat conditions.

Error bars represent SD; *** p < .001, ** p < .01, * p < .05



Articles influenced emotional reactions as well as directly related behaviors in line with planned manipulations.

Discussion

Contrary to expectations, desire for social touch increased. Fear reactions to threat could increase this desire for emotional regulation.

The increase in Openness under pathogen stress could be an indicator of a general openness to more information regarding the threat or an openness toward people for support (i.e., ingroup cooperation^[see 6]).

Conclusion & Future Prospects

The articles seem to elicit feelings of threat and changes in selfperception of personality and behavior.

With a larger sample, mediations can investigate whether changes in self-perceptions of personality traits explain behavioral changes.

References

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- [4] Sutin, A. R., Luchetti, M., Aschwanden, D., Lee, J. H., Sesker, A. A., Strickhouser, J. E., Stephan, Y., & Terracciano, A. (2020) Change in five-factor model personality traits during the acute phase of the coronavirus pandemic. PLOS ONE, 15(8), [5] Mortensen, C. R., Becker, D. V., Ackerman, J. M., Neuberg, S. L., & Kenrick, D. T. (2010). Infection breeds reticence: The
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