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# The role of spatial attention in attentional control over pain: an experimental investigation.

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## Source

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## Abstract

Distraction is a common method of pain control that is often found to be effective. However, it is still largely unexplored which components of distraction are responsible for its effects. This study investigated the role of the spatial location of task-relevant stimuli in the effectiveness of distraction. Two experiments were performed in which the spatial location of visual stimuli during nociceptive input was manipulated. In a first experiment, we tested whether the reaction to nociceptive information is slower when visual stimuli are presented at a different spatial location than at the same spatial location. In a second experiment, we examined whether the manipulation of spatial location affects the experience of pain. Overall, results indicated that directing attention away from the pain location results in a slower response to painful stimuli and a reduction in pain. It may be concluded that the analgesic effect of distraction is at least partly the result of the spatial location of the distracting information.

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