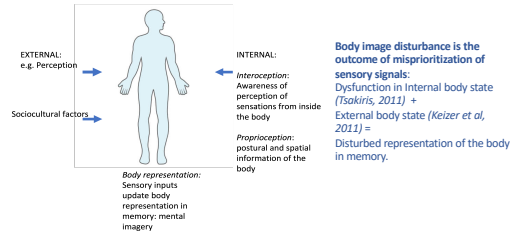


Introduction

Body image disturbance (BID) refers to the distortion of perception, behaviour, or cognition related to weight or shape (Posavac, 2002).

Negative body attitudes tend to arise in early adolescence (Runfola et al, 2013) with limited understanding of the developmental trajectory of BID from early adolescence to late adulthood.

The Allocentric lock theory (Riva, 2012):

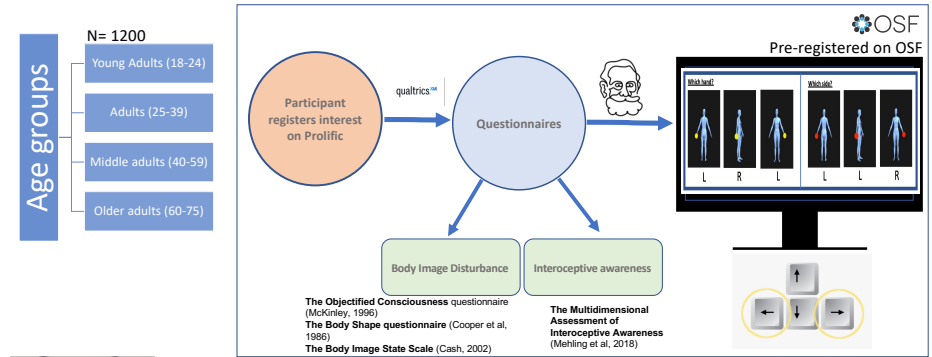


Research Questions

1. Is BID modulated by stage of life?
2. What is the relationship between interoceptive awareness and the ability to mentally represent one's body in space?
3. How is BID and body based mental imagery ability affected by age?



Methods



Project funded by UCD Ad Astra Studentship

Results

Hypothesis	F	df	p
Questionnaires			
H1: Age group x Interoceptive awareness	5.744	3	<.001
H2: Age group x Body Image Disturbance	6.702	3	<.001
Body Transformation task			
H3: Reaction time x Position	5.281	2	0.005
H4: Reaction time x Age	3.943	3	0.008
H5: Reaction time x weight	1.112	1	0.241

There was a strong, negative correlation between Body Image Disturbance and Interoceptive awareness ($r = -.23$, $n = 1200$, $p < 0.001$).

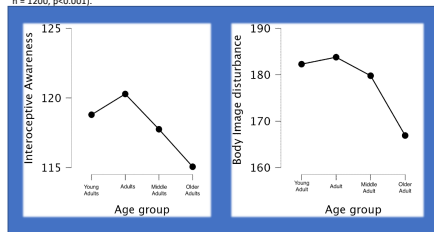


Figure 1. Mean interoceptive awareness scores and body image disturbance scores per age group

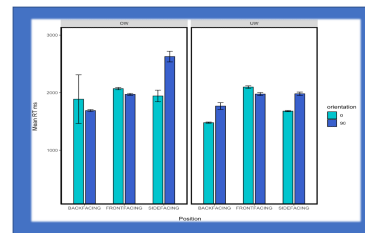


Figure 2. Mean reaction times (RTs) in milliseconds on Forward-facing, Back-facing and Front-facing bodies in overweight and underweight avatars displayed in 0 degrees and 90 degrees in correct trials.

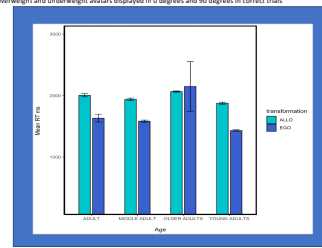


Figure 3. Mean reaction times (RTs) in milliseconds to make either egocentric or allocentric transformations per age group on correct trials.

Discussion

- Body image disturbance seems to be modulated by stage of life – body image disturbance seems to rise from young adulthood to adulthood and steadily decline from adulthood to middle adulthood into older adulthood
- Interoceptive awareness seems to slowly rise from young adulthood to adulthood and steadily decline from adulthood to middle adulthood into older adulthood where it is the lowest
- There is a significant difference in time taken to make egocentric and allocentric transformations with longer time taken to make allocentric transformations than egocentric transformations in all age groups apart from older adults

