

Investigating Emotion Regulation Difficulties as a Transdiagnostic Factor in Misophonia

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Background

- Misophonia is characterized by strong emotional (e.g., anger, anxiety), behavioral (e.g., efforts to cancel out the sounds), and physiological (e.g., increased heart rate) reactions to auditory stimuli,¹ which can cause distress and impairment across several domains such as school, work, and family².
- One potential mechanism that may account for impairment is difficulties in emotion regulation (ER). ER is the modulation of one's emotions, using strategies to engage in goal-directed behavior, and refraining from engaging in impulsive behaviors when experiencing negative emotions³.
- Preliminary results suggest that difficulties with ER may be correlated with misophonia severity (Cassiello-Robbins et al., 2020; Guetta et al., 2022), even when controlling for other mental health symptoms (Guetta et al., 2022).
- The aim of this study is to further investigate emotion dysregulation and clinical impairment within a community sample by comparing individuals with and without misophonia.
- We hypothesized that individuals with misophonia would report higher levels of emotion dysregulation than healthy controls, and that this greater emotion dysregulation would account for between group differences in impairment, after controlling for stress.

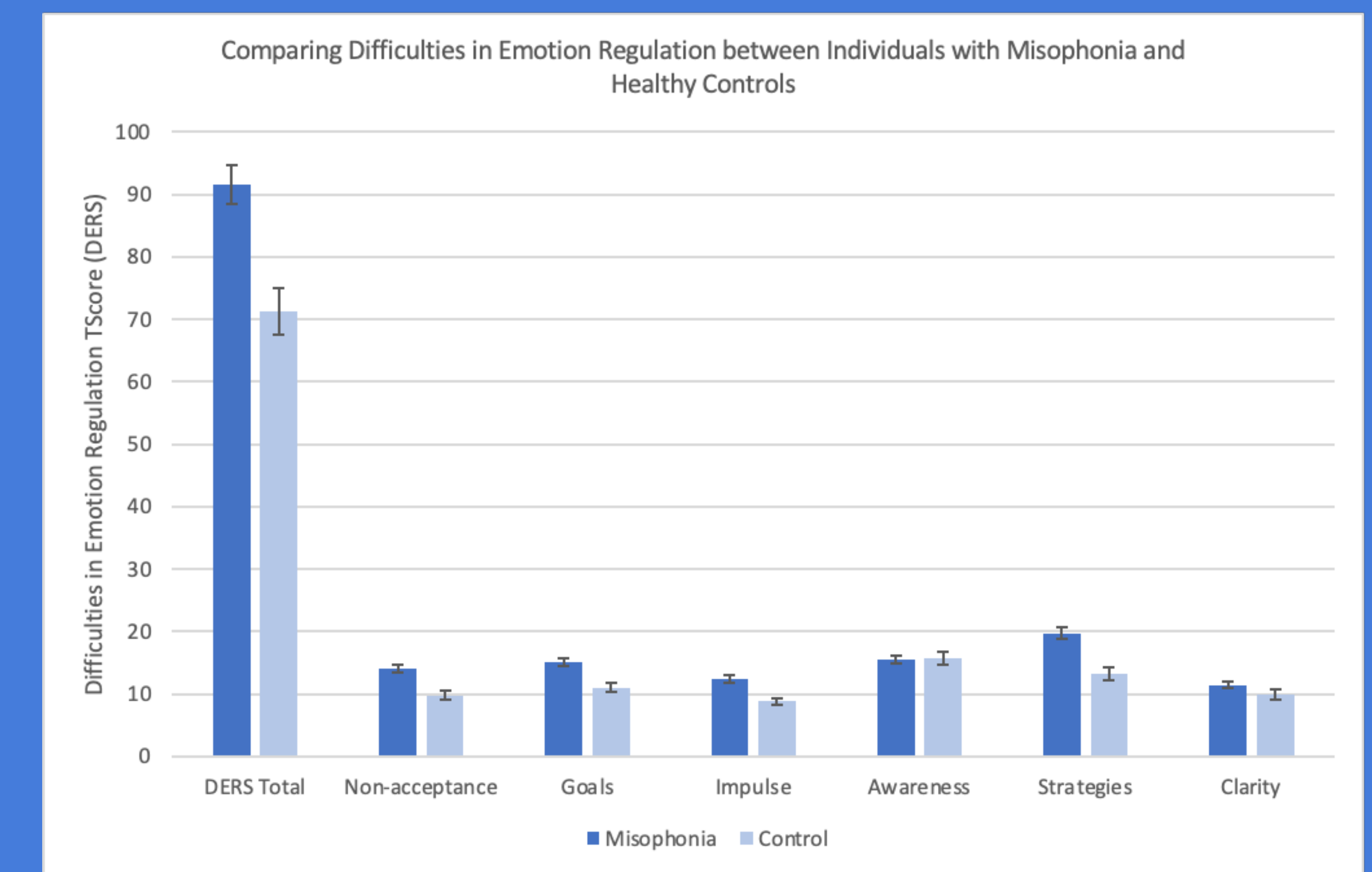
Methods

- The present study included 92 participants ($M_{age}=28.51$ years; $SD = 11.405$), with 81 screening positive for Misophonia and 31 healthy controls
- Participants completed a self-report battery including the Amsterdam Misophonia Scale (A-MISO-S; control group $M=3.645$, $SD = 3.929$; misophonia group $M=19.778$, $SD=4.472$), Difficulties with Emotion regulation (DERS), and the Work and Social Adjustment Scale (WSAS)

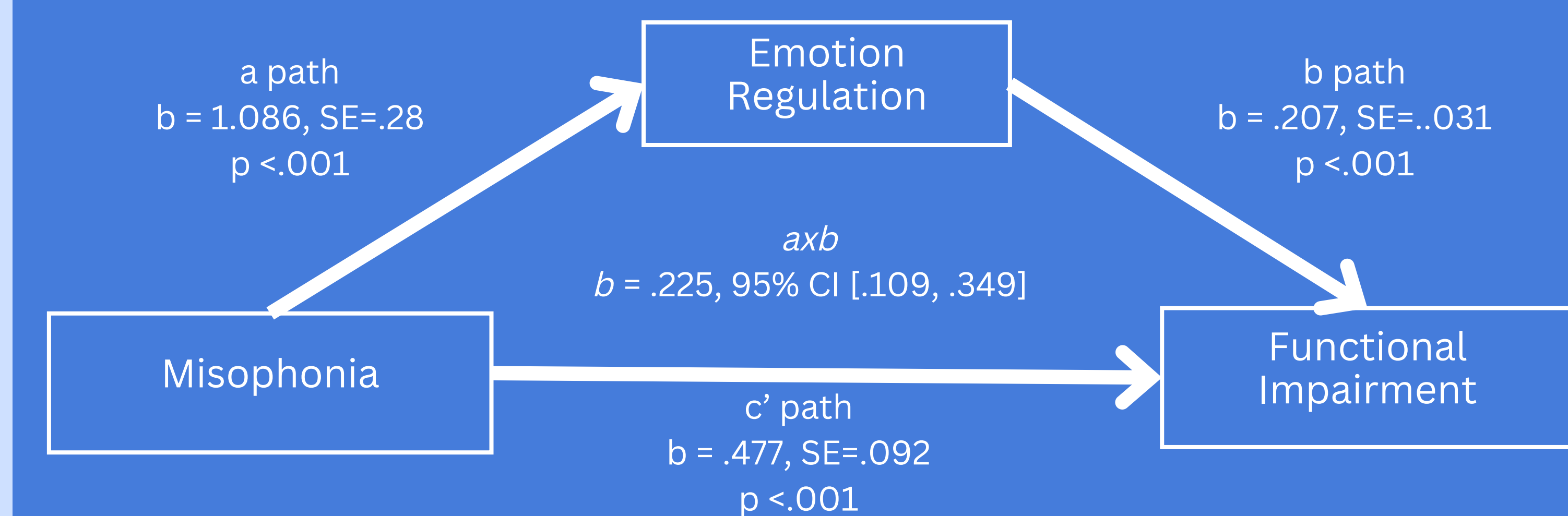
Difficulties with Emotion regulation in individuals with Misophonia may contribute to greater functional impairment across several life domains



Results



- *t*-tests showed significant differences between individuals with and without misophonia ($t_s = XX-XX$, $p_s > .001$ on all DERS subscales except awareness of emotions).



Discussion

- Results demonstrated that individuals with misophonia showed greater difficulties with emotion regulation and greater functional impairment when compared to healthy controls
- Emotion regulation was shown to significantly mediate the relationship between misophonia and functional impairment (e.g., ability to work, manage the home, engage in social/leisure activities, and make and maintain close relationships).
- Prior research has shown emotion regulation could be a potential underlying mechanism of misophonia symptoms (Cassiello-Robbins et al., 2020; Guetta et al., 2022).
- To target misophonia in treatment, providers should consider emotion regulation as a potential target when implementing evidence-based treatment such as Dialectical Behavior Therapy; Neacsiu et al., 2014)

