The lived experiences of people with misophonia in educational, work, and everyday settings: an Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis

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Abstract

Background and Objectives Misophonia is a condition characterised by the experience of negative emotional and physiological reactions to specific sounds, such as chewing, pen tapping or sniffing (Potgieter et al., 2019). People suffering from misophonia experience irrational and disproportionate feelings of anger, disgust, and harm ideation that negatively impact their lives. The current study aims to address a gap in the literature by exploring people’s lived experience with self-diagnosed misophonia in educational, work, and everyday settings. Methods Five interviews were conducted with individuals who self-diagnosed as having misophonia. Interview transcripts were analysed using Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis. Results The analysis revealed four superordinate themes: ‘Phenomenology of the misophonia reaction’, ‘Susceptibility to triggering sounds’, ‘Coping strategies when triggered’, and ‘Levels of attention and concentration’. Misophonia was reported as having wide-ranging effects on mental health and familial/social relationships. Coping strategies that re-direct attention and concentration, such as mindfulness techniques, were reported to be effective in ameliorating aversive reactions. Conclusions The findings provide the first phenomenological insight into misophonia through ideographical analysis of a small number of cases. Future research and implications of the study are discussed.

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