

Dear Editors,

We are pleased to submit the manuscript entitled “Gender differences in the interoceptive awareness: a pilot study on Italian people” (number of tables: 5; number of figures: 1) by Dr. Anna Re, Dr. Sonia Malvica, Dr. Chiara Lucifora, Prof. Pietro Perconti, and Prof. Domenica Bruni, which we would like you to consider for publication in the journal *Mediterranean Journal of Clinical Psychology*.

Bodily self-recognition requires the individual to be able to refer to himself through a reflexive representation, typically a schema or an image of one’s own body. Body ownership results from an interplay between exteroception and interoception (i.e., the ability to perceive one’s own body from the inside). It has been demonstrated that perceiving sensations inside the body could be associated with better regulation of emotions. Also, it has been reported that interoceptive awareness may be affected by gender. Therefore, this pilot study aimed to investigate the gender differences in the interoceptive awareness. 114 Italian volunteers (57 males and 57 females) completed the 32-item Multidimensional Assessment of Interoceptive Awareness (MAIA) questionnaire. The findings suggested that females were more inclined than males to notice bodily sensations associated with emotional states. Future research on the relationship between gender and physiological responses (e.g. heartbeat, skin conductance) for a specific ethnographic sample is recommended.

We believe our pilot study's findings will be of interest to the readership of your journal, since there has been little research aimed at investigating the relationship between interoceptive awareness and gender (e.g., Grabauskaite et al., 2017). The study of Cali et al. (2015) constituted the first attempt to assess the validity of the Italian-language translation of the MAIA. Although the factorial design of the study confirmed the reliability and dimensionality of the Italian translation (when compared with the original version), the authors declared that such a preliminary validation could be biased by a sample comprising 91% female individuals. Accordingly, it was the aim of our pilot study to investigate the gender differences in interoceptive awareness among Italian people.

Informed consent was obtained by all participants through written consent. All procedures were approved by the Research Ethics University Committee (approval n. COSPECS\_01\_2022) of the Department of Cognitive Sciences, Psychology, Education and Cultural Studies, University of Messina. The study was conducted in accordance with the Italian Association of Psychology code of ethics and the Declaration of Helsinki. The data are openly available in OSF at <https://osf.io/u7tqf>.

We declare that this manuscript is original, has not been published before and is not currently being considered for publication elsewhere. We have no funding to report and conflict of interest to disclose. We also declared that no competing interest exists. The manuscript has been approved for submission by all the named authors.

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Yours Sincerely,

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