

# Psychotherapy according to navratilova's and porreca's hedonistic: how pain affec...

[Psychology](#), [Psychotherapy](#)



Navratilova and Porreca (2014) research the impact of pain on reward and motivation of individuals, while focusing on the conventional assumptions of hedonism and godlessness.

A hedonistic approach to psychotherapy believes that individuals are motivated by the self, in that they seek pleasure and avoid pain. The authors demonstrate this view when they state that “ in the context of interacting motivations (for example, pain or danger from a predator) a neural decision is made on the basis of the value that a response provides to the organism either in terms of homeostatic needs or potential risks and benefits.”

According to the authors, not only do people act to avoid pain, but this behavior is driven by neural decisions. That is, we are biologically wired to act in a pain-avoidance fashion, and seek activities that produce pleasure. Thus, our motivations are exclusively internal, focused on our homeostatic needs.

An alternative to hedonism is altruism, which asserts that individuals' behavior can be motivated by others. This assumes that it is possible to act with completely selfless intentions. Furthermore, we may even endure pain if it is for the betterment of those around us. Though it is not incorrect to acknowledge that the brain plays a role in decision-making behavior, especially concerning pain avoidance and pleasure seeking, alternative motives must be taken into consideration by the authors. In the quote, the authors give the example of avoiding pain associated with danger from a predator. They predict that, after weighing the potential risks and benefits, the prey will act to avoid the predator/pain. However, an individual may

confront the predator in order to save another person. In many cases, people confront gunmen to try to disarm him or talk him down. This is not in their best interest, and may cause them pain or death, but they are acting to save potential victims—they are acting altruistically. If the authors were to take this assumption into consideration, the study would have included an analysis of possible altruistic or external factors that may influence an individual's motivations and behavior in the presence of pain.

The authors also demonstrate their support of a second conventional assumption: godlessness. This assumption states that there is no God, or that God is not involved in the temporal world (deism). This is exemplified in the same quote by the authors, stating that “ in the context of interacting motivations (for example, pain or danger from a predator) a neural decision is made on the basis of the value that a response provides to the organism either in terms of homeostatic needs or potential risks and benefits.” The authors' belief that our behaviors are based solely on neural decisions formulated within our brain demonstrates their support of a deistic or godless position: our world functions according to natural laws, without the interference of a higher power.

An alternative to godlessness is godfulness, which is the belief that a difference-making God exists and has the power to influence our actions. Although it is possible for an individual to act in response to a neural decision in the brain, it is equally as possible for an individual to act in accordance to a divine revelation. Also, the laws of nature do not always apply, as they do in the godlessness assumption. God is capable of defying the laws of nature

in an effort to play a role in temporal events. The authors should acknowledge the possibility of divine intervention in their research. An individual may not always be motivated by pain avoidance, but they may be spiritually motivated.