

# Identity fragmentation in patients with Dissociative Disorders, Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder, Borderline Personality Disorder, and Avoidant Personality Disorder

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<b>Ethical review</b>	Approved WMO
<b>Status</b>	Recruiting
<b>Health condition type</b>	Other condition
<b>Study type</b>	Observational non invasive

## Summary

### ID

NL-OMON51541

### Source

ToetsingOnline

### Brief title

Identity fragmentation in DD

### Condition

- Other condition
- Dissociative disorders

### Synonym

personality disorder, severe dissociative disorders, trauma-related disorders

### Health condition

Ook bij psychische stoornissen: persoonlijkheids- en gedragsstoornissen, posttraumatische

stresstoornis

## **Research involving**

Human

## **Sponsors and support**

**Primary sponsor:** Rijksuniversiteit Groningen

**Source(s) of monetary or material Support:** Ministerie van OC&W, Stichting tot Steun VCVGZ; Rino Zuid

## **Intervention**

**Keyword:** Identity fragmentation, Personality pathology, Severe dissociative disorders, Trauma-related psychopathology

## **Outcome measures**

### **Primary outcome**

The main study parameters are the outcomes of the cognitive tasks. For the hyperassociativity task an emotional detour score and a hyperassociativity score; for the card-sorting task scores on self-complexity, compartmentalization, overlap, differential importance, and proportion of negative attributes; for the emotion perception task an emotion recognition accuracy score and an emotion sensitivity score; for the future autobiographical memory test a future event specificity score; and finally for the dichotomous thinking task, a dichotomous thinking score, splitting score, and negative thinking score.

### **Secondary outcome**

Other study parameters pertain to relevant sample demographics and characteristics:

- Diagnosis
- Insomnia

- Emotion regulation
- Interpersonal functioning
- Childhood traumatic experiences
- Dissociation-related metamemory beliefs
- Vividness of visual and verbal imagination
- Identity style
- Alexithymia
- Experiential avoidance
- Dissociation between self-states

## Study description

### Background summary

Individuals with severe Dissociative Disorders (DD), such as Other Specified Dissociative Disorder (OSDD) or Dissociative Identity Disorder (DID), are characterized by identity fragmentation, meaning they report the experience of having two or more distinct identities who are largely unaware of each other and may report differences between identities in emotions and cognitions (e.g., memory). There is much debate about the etiology of this subjectively experienced identity fragmentation in DD. In the dominant practice-based model, identity fragmentation is conceptualized as a trauma-related response to childhood trauma (i.e., physical and/or sexual abuse) resulting in several identity states (e.g., trauma-avoidant and trauma-fixated). In contrast, according to a recently developed model, the schema-mode model of DD, the experience of different identities in DD is understood as the expression of maladaptive schema modes (i.e., conceptualizing it as a personality disorder). The two models fundamentally disagree on whether DD is more comparable to trauma-related or personality pathology. Contrasting hypotheses are based on testing the assumptions of these two models.

### Study objective

The aim of the current research project is to test the assumptions of these two models by comparing the cognitive performance of individuals with DD on several tasks (e.g., memory processing, emotion perception) with patients with

trauma-related psychopathology (i.e., post-traumatic stress disorder), and patients with personality-related pathology (borderline personality disorder and avoidant personality disorder).

## **Study design**

The study incorporates a quasi-experimental design.

## **Study burden and risks**

The main patient burden in this study is the time investment. As it would be too taxing to perform the diagnostic testing and cognitive tasks in one session, we have divided these in sessions over three days, for a maximum of 3.25 hours (including break time) per day. To further reduce patient burden, patients will perform the interviewing and testing at their treatment center together with a trained test-assistant. Healthy participants will perform the tasks at the RUG lab. We have used a comparable time schedule and procedure in previous studies with DID patients (e.g., see the research protocol METc2009/109). As all measures used in the current study have been previously used and validated in empirical research with comparable patient groups, we expect no further adverse effects for our participants.

## **Contacts**

### **Public**

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## **Trial sites**

### **Listed location countries**

Netherlands

# Eligibility criteria

## Age

Adults (18-64 years)

## Inclusion criteria

In order to be eligible to participate in this study, a patient must meet one of the following criteria according to the DSM-5 criteria (APA, 2013):

- A main diagnosis of Dissociative Identity Disorder (300.14) or Other specified Dissociative Disorder (300.15) as confirmed by using the Multidimensional Inventory of Dissociation (MID; Dell, 2006) and the DID section of the Dissociative Disorders Interview Schedule DSM-5 version (DDIS; Ross et al., 1989)
- A main diagnosis of Avoidant Personality Disorder (301.82), as confirmed by using the APD section of the SCID-5-PD interview (First et al., 2016)
- A main diagnosis of Borderline Personality Disorder (301.83), as confirmed by using the BPD section of the SCID-5-P interview (First et al., 2016)
- A main diagnosis of Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (309.81), as confirmed by using the PTSD checklist for DSM-5 (PCL-5; Weathers et al., 2013) as a consequence of childhood traumatic experiences before the age of 12

In order to be eligible to participate as a healthy comparison, a participant must not be currently diagnosed with a mental health disorder according to the DSM-5 criteria (APA, 2013), including the disorders named above, as assessed by using the MID, SCID-5-PV and PCL-5.

Participants with DID who can switch between several identity states must:

- be able to switch on demand between a self-selected trauma-fixated identity, a trauma-avoidant identity, and an overview identity state
- be able to perform the tasks in these identity states without spontaneously switching to other identities
- be able to perform the tasks in these identity states without interference of other identities

Participants with OSDD will not be asked to switch between identity states

## Exclusion criteria

A potential participant who meets any of the following criteria will be excluded from participation in this study:

- Severe current substance abuse (e.g., the use of hallucinogens, cannabis,

amphetamine-type stimulants and cocaine; DSM-5)

- Lack of fluency in Dutch
- Below the age of 18 or above the age of 65
- An IQ below 80
- For ethical reasons, those patients who are currently in crisis (i.e., immediate danger to oneself or others) will be excluded (e.g., acute high risk of suicide or severe self-injurious behavior, or severe aggression-control problems)

## Study design

### Design

**Study type:** Observational non invasive

Masking: Open (masking not used)

Control: Uncontrolled

Primary purpose: Basic science

### Recruitment

NL

Recruitment status: Recruiting

Start date (anticipated): 08-01-2024

Enrollment: 200

Type: Actual

### Medical products/devices used

Registration: No

## Ethics review

Approved WMO

Date: 05-12-2022

Application type: First submission

Review commission: METC Universitair Medisch Centrum Groningen (Groningen)

Approved WMO

Date: 19-05-2023

Application type: Amendment  
Review commission: METC Universitair Medisch Centrum Groningen (Groningen)  
Approved WMO  
Date: 22-05-2024  
Application type: Amendment  
Review commission: METC Universitair Medisch Centrum Groningen (Groningen)

## Study registrations

### Followed up by the following (possibly more current) registration

No registrations found.

### Other (possibly less up-to-date) registrations in this register

No registrations found.

### In other registers

Register	ID
CCMO	NL81040.042.22