

Unpredictable pain - soldier in the battlefield



You may have heard someone say: "that must have hurt!" or "it can't be that bad!?!". Maybe that's because we have all experienced pain at some stage in our lives, and we may have even had a similar injury, illness or health issue and we often think we know what another person's pain is like. Yet, with so many factors influencing our pain experiences, there is really hardly anything predictable about how badly someone hurts!

This has been shown in studies that a person will have more or less pain depending on the type of music played at the time of the pain experiment. And if music can have such an influence, we can start to understand how many other factors can influence our pain.

One extreme example of this is seen in soldiers on a battlefield. Sometimes they can suffer serious injuries in a battle but not experience any pain at that stage. This makes sense from a threat perspective: the brain is trying to keep the soldier alive which is more urgent than the threat of the injuries in the battlefield and it's only once the soldier gets to hospital the pain comes on.

It makes sense looking at the bigger picture. Our brain's main role is survival and if it's not practical to feel pain at a certain time, our brain won't create that experience.