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Poster Presentation Research

Prevalence of Obsessive Beliefs and Intolerance of Uncertainty among College Students

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Abstract

Intolerance of uncertainty (IU) is increasingly conceptualized as a transdiagnostic factor underlying anxiety disorders and depression. Current understanding of the relationship between intolerance of uncertainty and specific obsessive compulsive symptom domains remains limited. The purpose of the present study was to explore the prevalence of obsessive compulsive beliefs and intolerance of uncertainty among college going youth and to explore for any possible associations. A multistage cluster sampling procedure was used to collect data from a sample of 200 students (100 boys and 100 girls) ranging in age from 18 to 26 years. Data was collected using a socio-demographic information sheet, obsessive-compulsive beliefs questionnaire and the intolerance of uncertainty questionnaire. Findings revealed obsessive thoughts in 20.8% of males and 11.5% of females. Extreme intolerance of uncertainty was reported by 16.7% of the males and by 7.7% of females. Males and females differ significantly on perfectionism and importance regarding control of thoughts, with females reporting greater perfectionism and males endorsing greater beliefs regarding thought control. Significant age differences emerged only with regard to uncertainty regarding one's ability to perform, with greater intolerance reported by male students. In both groups, obsessions regarding responsibility and threat estimation correlated with stress of uncertainty and expectation of negative events. Perfectionistic beliefs were associated with expectation of negative events in both groups and in the female group they were also associated with uncertainty regarding performance and stress of uncertainty. Obsessive beliefs regarding loss of control over thoughts were related to all the components of intolerance of uncertainty only in males. Regression analysis indicated that intolerance of uncertainty can be predicted by beliefs about perfectionism in females and by beliefs of thought control in males. The prevalence of obsessive beliefs and intolerance of anxiety is greater in males. Intolerance of anxiety can be predicted by beliefs about perfectionism in males and by beliefs about thought control in females.

Keywords: Obsessive Beliefs, Intolerance of Uncertainty, College Students, Anxiety, Thought Control.

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