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Introduction



Generalized anxiety disorder (GAD) is characterized by excessive and uncontrollable worry over a variety of daily events

Dysfunctional beliefs:



Negative beliefs about worry: metacognitive beliefs that worry is uncontrollable and dangerous



Intolerance of uncertainty: negative feelings towards uncertain situations

Prior research:



Which dysfunctional beliefs are found to predict GAD appear to depend on whether the disorder is measured dimensionally or categorically (Dugas et al., 2007; Koerner et al., 2015)

Hypothesis: Negative beliefs about worry will be the strongest predictor of both GAD symptom severity and Probable GAD classification

Methods

Data collection: online survey through Qualtrics

Sample: 344 pre-screened high worry undergraduate MacEwan psychology students (Mage 20.5; 84% female)

Probable GAD: $n = 211$ **Non-GAD:** $n = 133$

Self-report measures:

- Generalized Anxiety Disorder Questionnaire - DSM-IV (GADQ-IV)
- Intolerance of Uncertainty Scale - 18 (IUS-18)
- Metacognitions Questionnaire - 30 (MCQ-30)
- Affective Control Scale (ACS)
- Cognitive Avoidance Questionnaire (CAQ)
- Negative Problem Orientation Questionnaire (NPOQ)

NEGATIVE BELIEFS ABOUT WORRY WERE THE STRONGEST PREDICTOR OF BOTH GAD SYMPTOM SEVERITY AND PROBABLE GAD CATEGORIZATION



Results

- Negative beliefs about worry, intolerance of uncertainty, and fear of depression predicted GAD symptoms measured dimensionally
- Negative beliefs about worry and intolerance of uncertainty predicted Probable GAD categorization
- Negative beliefs about worry was the strongest predictor of both GAD symptom severity and Probable GAD

Pearson r Correlations

Measures	GAD Symptom severity
IUS-18	.66**
MCQ-30 NBW	.70**
MCQ-30 PBW	.11*
MCQ-30 NCT	.36**
ACS Depression	.53**
ACS Anxiety	.62**
CAQ	.48**
NPOQ	.58**

Predictors of GAD Symptom Severity

Measures	t	pr
IUS-18	3.72***	.22***
MCQ-30 NBW	6.76***	.38***
MCQ-30 PBW	-0.80	-.05
MCQ-30 NCT	-1.32	-.08
ACS Depression	2.97**	.18**
ACS Anxiety	0.89	.06
CAQ	1.36	.08
NPOQ	1.27	.08

Probable GAD Classification

	No GAD	Probable GAD	% Correct
No GAD	143	27	84.1
Probable GAD	29	78	72.9
Overall %			79.8

Predictors of Probable GAD

Measures	OR (95% CI)
IUS-18	1.06 (1.02-1.12)**
MCQ-30 NBW	1.27 (1.14-1.42)***
MCQ-30 PBW	0.97 (0.90-1.05)
MCQ-30 NCT	0.99 (0.90-1.10)
ACS Depression	1.04 (1.00-1.08)
ACS Anxiety	0.99 (0.96-1.04)
CAQ	1.01 (1.00-1.03)
NPOQ	1.00 (0.96-1.05)

* $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$

Implications

- Findings are consistent with previous research suggesting that predictors of GAD vary depending on whether the disorder is conceptualized dimensionally or categorically
- NBW should be a primary focus of GAD research and therapy

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