



Associazione
Italiana
di Psicologia



UNIVERSITÀ
DEL SALENTO

Dipartimento
Storia
Società
Studi
sull'Uomo
SHS
History
Society
Human
Studies
Department

Proceedings

XXII NATIONAL CONGRESS
ITALIAN PSYCHOLOGICAL ASSOCIATION
CLINICAL AND DYNAMIC SECTION
LECCE -SEPTEMBER 17-19 2021

*Department of History, Society and Human Studies
University of Salento, Lecce, Italy*



XXII CONGRESSO NAZIONALE **LECCE** dal 17 al 19
SETTEMBRE 2021
Associazione Italiana di Psicologia Sezione di Psicologia Clinica e Dinamica

POSTER SESSION**NATIONAL SCIENTIFIC COMMITTEE**

Renata Tambelli (Università “La Sapienza” di Roma)
Mario Fulcheri (Università degli Studi “G. D’Annunzio” di Chieti)
Claudia Mazzeschi (Università degli Studi di Perugia)
Silvia Salcuni (Università degli Studi di Padova)
Maria di Blasi (Università degli Studi di Palermo)
Eleonora Volpato (Università ‘Cattolica del Sacro Cuore’ di Milano)

LOCAL SCIENTIFIC COMMITTEE*Coordinators*

Claudia Venuleo (Università del Salento)
Omar Gelo (Università del Salento)

Components

Maria Fara De Caro (Università degli Studi “Aldo Moro” di Bari)
Sergio Salvatore (Università “La Sapienza” di Roma)
Alessandro Taurino (Università degli Studi “Aldo Moro” di Bari)

ORGANIZING COMMITTEE*Coordinators*

Claudia Venuleo, Omar Gelo e Tiziana Marinaci

Componentes

Karen Bruschi, Lucrezia Ferrante, Gloria Lagetto, Annalisa Levante, Oronzo Mazzeo,
Giulia Piraino, Matteo Reho, Simone Rollo, Serena Verbena, Matteo Jacopo Zaterini

EDITORS

Karen Bruschi, Omar Gelo, Oronzo Mazzeo, Claudia Venuleo

Dipartimento di Storia, Società e Studi sull’Uomo, Università del Salento

Development and validation of the altered eating behaviors checklist for obese patients (AEBC-O)

Matteo Aloï^{1,2}, Marianna Rania^{1,2}, Elvira Anna Carbone^{1,2}

¹ Department of Health Sciences, University “Magna Graecia” of Catanzaro, Italy;

² Outpatient Unit for Clinical Research and Treatment of Eating Disorders. University Hospital “Mater Domini”, Catanzaro, Italy.

Abstract

Introduction: Obesity has become a major health problem given the high prevalence, the serious consequences for the health of patients and the increased risk of mortality. Obesity is associated with high psychiatric comorbidity, poor compliance and high rates of therapeutic drop out. Research has shown that it is possible to phenotype patients according to their eating behaviors. This study aims to validate a checklist that describes the altered eating behaviors of obese patients (AEBC-O) in clinical practice. The final version of the AEBC-O consists of 18 items.

Method: The exploratory factor analysis was performed and the McDonald coefficient ω was calculated in a sample of 471 people. Confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) was then performed and concurrent validity assessed in a sample of 171 obese patients.

Results: In study 1, through the Principal Axis Factoring method, 5 factors (food addiction, night eating, binge eating, sweet eating, and prandial hyperphagia) were extracted which explained 68.3% of the variance. The McDonald coefficient ω of the AEBC-O ranged between .800 (hyperphagia) and .919 (binge eating) indicating a very good reliability.

In study 2, the CFA assigned the elements to the original five-factor model showing an adequate fit: CFI = .934, TLI = .920, RMSEA = .075, relative chi-square (χ^2 / df) = 1.954 and SRMR = .060, thus suggesting the appropriateness of the AEBC-O model. With the exception of the hyperphagia factor, significant correlations emerged between the AEBC-O and the measures of food addiction, grazing, night eating and binge eating that demonstrate adequate convergent validity.

Conclusion: AEBC-O appears to be an easy-to-use, valid and effective tool for identifying altered eating behaviors in obese patients in clinical practice.

Motibot: the virtual coach for healthy coping intervention in diabetes

Giulia Bassi^{1,2}

¹Department of Developmental Psychology and Socialization, University of Padova, Italy

²Digital Health Lab, Fondazione Bruno Kessler, Trento, Italy

Abstract

Introduction: Digital solutions, such as virtual coaches (VCs), can support people with diabetes by motivating them to better manage their health. Healthy coping encompasses several interrelated psychological dimensions of both distress and mental well-being, which often influence chronic disease outcomes. Therefore, the aim of the study was to develop a VC capable of motivating adults with diabetes to use appropriate coping strategies according to the American Association of Diabetes Educators guidelines for healthy coping.

Method: A total of 12 adults with diabetes ($M=27.91$; $SD=9.82$) interacted with the VC through the Telegram messaging application for an overall duration of 12 sessions. Adults have completed Patient Health Questionnaire, the Generalized Anxiety Disorder, the Perceived Stress Scale at pre- and post-intervention, the User Experience and Engagement Questionnaire and at follow-up World Health Organization-5 Well-Being Index and the Problem Areas in Diabetes-Short form.

Results: The results showed that there was no worsening in anxiety, stress, and depression symptoms between pre- and post-intervention. The VC was perceived motivating and encouraging in the adoption of appropriate coping strategies as well as trustworthy, reflective, and stimulating in its dialogical interaction. Indeed, patients felt involved in the interaction with the VC, and with an overall perception of a better quality of life, in the absence of diabetes distress.

Conclusions: This study sheds light on the importance of digital solutions in health care for people with diabetes for managing positively their daily lives and conditions. This is the first experimental study, thus further iterations of the intervention are needed with a large sample size, in which the person is at the centre of the design. Notwithstanding, the results are promising and are progressing in accordance with the expectations both in terms of user experience and user engagement.

Prevalence of symptomatic deterioration and levels of mental health distress among people with eating disorders and obesity: a systematic review and meta-analysis

Rubinia Celeste Bonfanti¹, Bianca Bosarini², Lucia Fortunato¹

¹ Department of Psychology, Educational Science and Human Movement, University of Palermo, Palermo, Italy,

² Department of Psychiatry, Faculty of Medicine, University of Geneva, Child and Adolescent Psychiatry, Geneva, Switzerland

Abstract

Introduction: The COVID-19 pandemic has caused mild or moderate levels of mental distress among general population. However, research on the impact of COVID-19 lockdown on mental health among people with eating disorders (EDs) and clinical obesity has yielded mixed findings. Therefore, the aim of this systematic review and meta-analysis is to estimate the impact of the COVID-19 outbreak on the prevalence of symptomatic behaviors and mental distress among people with EDs and obesity. *Method:* This review was reported consistent with the PRISMA statement. All empirical studies that examined patients with eating disorders or obesity as primary diagnosis during the COVID-19 pandemic were eligible. A meta-analysis was conducted to assess the overall prevalence of deterioration of relevant outcomes as well as the change in ED symptoms and mental distress from pre-pandemic baseline levels over the course of the pandemic. Prevalence rates were pooled with meta-analysis using a random-effects model. Heterogeneity was tested using I-squared (I²) statistics. A total of 26 articles met the inclusion criteria (n= 3399, 85.7% female). *Results:* The pooled prevalence of symptomatic deterioration was 66% (95% CI 48–81) in 10 studies with adolescent and adult EDs. The pooled prevalence of increased weight was 52% (95% CI 25–78) among obese patients in 4 studies. More than a half of the participants experienced depression and anxiety. At least 75% of individuals with EDs reported shape concerns, eating concerns, and increased thinking about exercising. However, pooled analyses of longitudinal studies which examined changes in symptoms before and during the pandemic showed no significant differences in BMI, ED symptom severity and bingeing. *Conclusion:* This meta-analysis found that the majority of people with EDs and obesity reported symptomatic worsening during the pandemic. However, further longitudinal study is needed to examine what clinical groups experienced higher distress than did others as well as the long-term negative consequences of COVID-19.

A picture of the psychological effects of COVID-19 emergency among chronic disease patients: the mediating effects of emotion regulation strategies

Sonia Monique Bramanti¹, Carmen Trumello¹, Valentina Marino¹

¹ Department of Psychological, Health, and Territorial Sciences, University “G. D’Annunzio” of Chieti-Pescara, Italy

Abstract

The novel Coronavirus disease and the measures implemented to reduce its transmission, might have produced negative psychological outcomes especially in chronically ill patients. These individuals, in fact, have to face a physical burden due to the additional worries to their health condition, psychological repercussion as increased emotional distress and practical consequences with changes in their daily routine and medical treatment (Liu et al., 2020). The aim of the present study was to explore the impact of COVID-19 on anxious and depressive symptoms among patients with a chronic illness, and to examine the role of COVID-19 related worries and emotion regulation strategies (i.e., cognitive reappraisal and expressive suppression) on perceived stress. Participants were 124 individuals (mean age = 48.88 years; S.D. = 14.95) with a chronic disease. The following self-report instruments were administered: Emotion Regulation Questionnaire (ERQ; Gross & John, 2003), Hospital Anxiety and Depression Scale (HADS; Zigmond & Snaith, 1983) and COVID-19 Worry Questionnaire. Findings showed that anxiety ($t = 3.073$, $p = .003$) and depression ($t = 3.487$, $p = .001$) levels were significantly higher during the peak of COVID-19 outbreak compared with the prepandemic period. Furthermore, COVID-19 related worries and perceived stress were positively associated ($b = .7732$, $p < .01$); expressive suppression partially mediated the relationship between COVID-19 related worries and perceived stress ($b = .3168$, $p < .01$), while cognitive reappraisal was not statistically significant. The results highlighted that chronic patients constitute a vulnerable population due to the impact of COVID-19 and its possible repercussions on their health status; they could be at a greater risk of negative psychological outcomes and may need specific interventions targeting emotional expression.

The protective factors of psychological well-being. A longitudinal study in Italian emerging adults.

Livia Buratta¹, Luciana Pagano Salmi¹

¹ Dipartimento di Filosofia, Scienze Sociali, Umane e della Formazione. Università degli Studi di Perugia.

Abstract

The psychological well-being (PWB) considered in a wider perspective as optimal experience and human functioning. This is the main goal which people aspire to. It is challenging to maintain it during all stages of life, especially in time of transition such as the emerging adulthood (EA). EA is a life period characterized by multiple life changes and developmental challenges, becoming so a very sensitive time. How individuals facing life transitions is related to the PWB perception. Few studies investigated the protective factors that play a key role as determinants of the PWB. Most of them focused on the role of interpersonal and relational dimensions, little interest in understanding the role that intrapersonal dimensions may have. The present longitudinal study aimed to explore the predictor role of internal functioning dimensions, such as self-esteem (RSES) and self-control (BSCS) measured at the baseline, in the six dimensions of the Ryff PWB (PWBS) measured three months later, among 243 Italian EAs (56,4% females - Mage=21,77; Sd=1,52). They filled out an online survey at two different times, to assess some socio-demographic variables (i.e., SES, living situation, romantic relationship) and some intrapersonal dimensions (i.e., self-esteem and self-control). The hierarchical regression analysis showed that both RSES and BSCS predicted most PWBS dimensions, in particular explained about 30% of the variance of environmental mastery ($R^2 = ,37$; $F = 23,81$; $p < .001$) and self-acceptance ($R^2 = ,29$; $F = 16,59$; $p < .001$), above and beyond the prediction by some socio-demographic variables, repeatedly recognized as PWB incident factors. The study suggests that self-esteem and self-control could be important protective factors to improve sense of mastery and competence in managing the environment and possess a positive attitude toward the self. These results may have important implications both in research and clinical field for the promotion of the PWB in EA.

Psychological health issues subsequent to SARS-CoV-2 induced restrictive measures: a follow-up study.*Silvia Bussone*¹¹Dept. Of Dynamic, Clinical and Health Psychology – Sapienza**Abstract**

Background: COVID-19 pandemic and the following restrictions had detrimental effects on individual's psychological health. In fact, in a previous study we reported that the first lockdown (March 2020) led to a global worsening in mental health, modulated by parenting and attachment. Since the pandemic is still affecting our lives, it is necessary to understand its long-term impact on mental health.

The purpose of this follow-up study is to explore how the psychological response assessed in the previous study changes according to the restrictive measures implemented in November 2020, and how attachment and parenting modulate this response.

Methods: We tested 58 university students for psychopathological symptoms (SCL-90-R, STAI-Y), stress perception (PSS), attachment style (RQ), parental care and control (PBI) six months before the pandemic (phase 1). In the same subjects, we re-tested SCL-90-R, STAI-Y and PSS in April-May 2020 (early pandemic-phase 2) and in November 2020 (late pandemic-phase 3).

Results: We observed a significant decrease in depressive symptoms, psychological distress, and hostility in phase 3 vs. phase 2. Conversely, no variation in phobic anxiety, perceived stress, and state anxiety was detected in phase 2 vs. phase 3.

Moreover, attachment modulated state anxiety over time. Insecure-attached individuals exhibited a stable high state anxiety over time (phase 1-2-3) regardless of the restrictive measures' changes, whereas the secure ones showed a modulation in anxiety following the same environmental changes.

Conclusion: Despite the pandemic is perceived stressful as during phase 2, a habituation process occurred and led to a global amelioration in mental health. Moreover, a diverse flexibility to environmental changes, that may favor the habituation, is notable according to the attachment style, whereas secure individuals exhibit a better environmental adjustment with less anxious activation in phase 3 vs. those who are insecure at the same time-point.

How COVID-19 has affected people with dementia and carers: an Italian multicenter study

Ilaria Chirico¹, Alessandro Pappadà¹, Giovanni Ottoboni¹

¹Department of Psychology, University of Bologna, Italy

Abstract

Older people, many of whom have dementia, are at increased risk of severe COVID-19 infection, morbidity, and mortality. Indeed, they have been the subject of specific ‘cocooning’ measures designed to keep them safe, but apart from community. In such a scenario, the pandemic has negatively affected the overall health and social care sectors. The aim of this study was to explore the impact of COVID-19 and associated public health restrictions on the lives of people with dementia (PWD) and carers, and access to dementia care across different settings. Informal (relatives) and formal (professionals of various specialties) carers participated in remote semi-structured interviews. Participants were asked about their experiences of the pandemic, and how restrictions have impacted on their lives and care. Transcripts were analysed by three researchers using inductive thematic analysis. A total of 90 carers (47 informal, 43 formal) were interviewed. Results showed that the pandemic has negatively affected PWD and carers. Indeed, deteriorated cognitive and physical health, and challenging behaviors occurred in PWD. The pandemic also removed access to social support services, thus increasing carer burden. Remote services guaranteed the continuity of relationships with professionals, families, and small groups of peers. However, they were limited in benefit and usability for PWD. Indeed, barriers with access and use of digital technologies were associated with dementia deficits, low digital literacy, and the need for carers’ supervision. Professionals also described working under complex and stressful circumstances. The pandemic has amplified dementia as a global public health problem. Safe solutions should be designed to allow access to vital support services, and facilitate more frequent in-person contact between families and residents with dementia. Furthermore, ad-hoc measures should be taken to prevent burnout, and staff shortages in an already strained and vulnerable workforce.

To be or not to be in a romantic relationship: associations with psychological distress, alexithymia, and adult attachment

Marialaura Di Tella¹, Agata Benfante¹

¹Department of Psychology, University of Turin.

Abstract

The main aim of the present study was to explore the prevalence of anxiety/depressive symptoms, alexithymic traits, and attachment dimensions in individuals who were in a romantic relationship compared to those who were not. Secondly, we aimed to evaluate which among the investigated factors could significantly predict the participants' relationship status. In order to reach those goals, 596 (410 in a relationship and 186 not in a relationship) were asked to complete the following measures: (1) Toronto Alexithymia scale (TAS-20); (2) Experience in Close Relationship Scale (ECR-12); (3) Beck Depression Inventory - II (BDI-II); and (4) State-Trait Anxiety Inventory (STAI-Y1). Group comparisons revealed that participants not in a relationship reported higher levels of both anxiety/depressive symptoms and alexithymic traits, as well as higher scores on attachment avoidance and attachment anxiety ($p < .01$) compared to those in a relationship. Results of the hierarchical logistic regression analysis showed that age (OR=0.98; 95% CI=0.96;0.99), educational level (OR=0.61; 95% CI=0.40;0.92), ECR 'Anxiety' (OR=1.42; 95% CI=1.21;1.66), ECR 'Avoidance' (OR=1.94; 95% CI=1.62;2.33), TAS-20 total (OR=0.97; 95% CI=0.95;0.99), and BDI-II total (OR=1.05; 95% CI=1.02;1.08) were statistically significant predictors of group membership. The final model explained 26% of the variance, with 74% of participants correctly categorized as in relationship/not in a relationship. The present findings show that insecure attachment styles, alexithymic traits, and depressive symptoms seem to characterize individuals who are not in a relationship. From a clinical perspective, psychologists should pay attention to those aspects when single patients report the end of a relationship or the desire to find a partner.

Emotional eating, alexithymia and weight gain in healthy young adults

*Francesca Favieri*¹

¹ Dipartimento di Psicologia, "Sapienza" Università di Roma

Abstract

Emotional Eating (EE) is the tendency to overeat to cope with negative emotions and stressful situations. It was reported in excessive body weight and pathological eating behaviors. EE could be expressed as an eating behavior associated with emotional dysregulation. Accordingly, alexithymia (i.e., a stable personality trait indicating emotional dysregulation) is frequently correlated to high EE levels in individuals with obesity or eating disorders. This study aims to verify the relationship between alexithymia, EE, and weight status in a healthy sample.

Eighty-four healthy young adults with normal weight and without eating disorders (mean age: 23.38 ± 2.50) participate in the study. The Italian version of the Dutch Eating Questionnaire and the 20-

items Toronto Alexithymia Scale were adopted to assess EE and alexithymia. Physiological indices of body condition (body mass index, body adiposity index, and waist-to-height ratio) were measured.

EE correlated positively with weight indices ($p < 0.03$). No significant association emerged between alexithymia and EE, nor between alexithymia and weight.

The results of the study confirmed an association between weight status and EE even in a healthy sample. However, the early association between alexithymia and EE was disconfirmed. The absence of pathological alexithymia could justify this result. According to previous literature, the study would indicate that alexithymia could be related to EE only in severe weight conditions, as a component of a larger set of emotional dysregulation mechanisms that can influence weight gain through dysfunctional eating behaviors. It would be interesting to investigate EE in a sample of people with high levels of alexithymia. Emotional dysregulation and EE could be considered subthreshold variables capable of affecting BMI only when associated with predisposing environmental and social factors, which should be explored in future studies to prevent the risk of overweight.

Emotional Eating (EE) is the tendency to overeat to cope with negative emotions and stressful situations. It was reported in excessive body weight and pathological eating behaviors. EE could be expressed as an eating behavior associated with emotional dysregulation. Accordingly, alexithymia (i.e., a stable personality trait indicating emotional dysregulation) is frequently correlated to high EE levels in individuals with obesity or eating disorders. This study aims to verify the relationship between alexithymia, EE, and weight status in a healthy sample.

Eighty-four healthy young adults with normal weight and without eating disorders (mean age: 23.38 ± 2.50) participate in the study. The Italian version of the Dutch Eating Questionnaire and the 20-items Toronto Alexithymia Scale were adopted to assess EE and alexithymia. Physiological indices of body condition (body mass index, body adiposity index, and waist-to-height ratio) were measured.

EE correlated positively with weight indices ($p < 0.03$). No significant association emerged between alexithymia and EE, nor between alexithymia and weight.

The results of the study confirmed an association between weight status and EE even in a healthy sample. However, the early association between alexithymia and EE was disconfirmed. The absence of pathological alexithymia could justify this result. According to previous literature, the study would indicate that alexithymia could be related to EE only in severe weight conditions, as a component of a larger set of emotional dysregulation mechanisms that can influence weight gain through dysfunctional eating behaviors. It would be interesting to investigate EE in a sample of people with high levels of alexithymia. Emotional dysregulation and EE could be considered subthreshold variables capable of affecting BMI only when associated with predisposing environmental and social factors, which should be explored in future studies to prevent the risk of overweight.

Patterns of emotional availability in mother-infant dyads in the context of substance use disorder

Bianca Filippi¹, Cristian Di Gesto², Micol Parolin¹

¹Dipartimento di Psicologia dello Sviluppo e della Socializzazione, Università degli Studi di Padova,

²Dipartimento di Scienze della Salute, Università degli Studi di Firenze

Abstract

Maternal Substance Use Disorder (SUD) represents a risk factor for parenting, parent-child relationships, and child development (Parolin & Simonelli, 2016; Ross et al., 2015). Different studies focused on specific parenting dimensions (e.g., maternal sensitivity or intrusiveness), comparing their functioning in mothers with SUD and low-risk mothers. Fewer studies considered patterns of functioning between different parent's characteristics. The aim of this study was to identify patterns of Emotional Availability (EA) – that is the capacity of a dyad to share an emotionally healthy relationship (Biringen, 2008) – and to examine their association with individual factors and maternal psychopathology, in order to provide a global index of the quality of mother-infant interaction and dyadic structure. The study involved 77 mothers with SUD (Mage=28.55yrs, SD=6.41) and their children (47% male, Mage=12.47mths, SD=15.04). Mother-child interactions were observed and rated with the Emotional Availability Scales (EAS) at the admission of the dyads into a residential Therapeutic Community. Cluster analysis was used to detect potentially different patterns of dyadic interactions. The different groups of mother-child dyads were examined in relation to contextual and clinical variables, assessed through specific checklists, and to maternal psychopathology, measured through the SCL-90-R. Four EA patterns were identified: (a) “low functioning dyads” (b) “low functioning mother with inconsistent child”, (c) “inconsistent mother with low functioning child”, and (d) “functioning dyads.” These patterns presented significant differences with respect to clinical variables inherent SUD and pregnancy, and marginally significant differences with respect to psychopathology. These findings make a contribution to the understanding of mother-child interactions in the context of maternal substance use disorder. Implications for assessment and treatment will be discussed.

A new diagnostic tool to assess an emerging behavioral dependence: the binge-watching addiction questionnaire

Giuseppe Forte¹

¹Dipartimento di Psicologia, “Sapienza” Università di Roma

Abstract

The approach to the vision of TV series has deeply changed in the last years, and watching multiple episodes of TV content in a single session becomes a popular viewing pattern referred to as binge-watching (BW). Recent studies identified some features of BW, which make it similar to addictive behaviors. This study aims to validate a short self-report questionnaire focused on assessing binge-watching behavior and determining some psychological aspects of this behavioral pattern.

An online survey was adopted to administer the Binge-Watching Addiction Questionnaire (BWAQ) in the general population (N = 1277). Exploratory and confirmatory factor analyses assessed both the validity and the structure of the 20-items scale, underlining a four-factor model characterized by the main characteristics of behavioral addiction (i.e., “Craving”, “Dependency”, “Anticipation”, “Avoidance”). Given the high psychometric quality, the BWAQ can differentiate between people who adopt maladaptive watching activities from those who use TV series as leisure and entertainment activities. Accordingly, in the overall sample, 4% of respondents (45 out of 1277) reported problematic levels of BW. Moreover, the positive association between the BWAQ scores and levels of impulsivity and depression seems to indicate that the problematic BW may occur in comorbidity with other psychopathologies, in line with the studies on other behavioral addictions.

The BWAQ is the first validated Italian questionnaire for the assessment of the BW. This study would seem to demonstrate the diagnostic potential of the BWAQ, which can be adopted as a rapid clinical screening tool for identifying the risk of behavioral addiction. Early identification of problematic BW could help in the development of early interventions. In addition, the BWAQ will be able to give a new impulse to studies aimed at investigating the characteristics and magnitude of this emerging phenomenon.

A phenomenological point of view on problem gambling

*Fabio Frisone*¹

¹ Department of Cognitive Sciences, Psychology, Educational and Cultural Studies (COSPECS), University of Messina, Italy

Abstract

Introduction: The current reference nosography, which promotes the investigation of psychic phenomena starting from organic assumptions, has placed problem gambling among substance-related and addictive disorders, because these behaviors share some characteristics as the direct activation of the brain reward system. *Method:* The method of phenomenological psychopathology, which studies the body as *lived* (*Leib*) and not as an organism (*Körper*), aims to understand the life-world (*Lebenswelt*) of the gambler through the discovery of the meanings underlying the behavior of the individual and through the exploration of

existentials a priori. Results: Beyond the explanations proposed by psychophysiological investigations, the phenomenological method has shown that the adherence to gambling behavior concerns the essential structure of the gambler: even before the feeling of emptiness that arises from the need to gamble, the gambler lives an existential emptiness that prevents the natural flow of the *lived* time, and this psychic disposition contributes to the repetition of the gambling behavior. *Conclusions:* Problem gambling should be understood as a particular form of mania defined as *appetitive tension (Süchtigkeit)* rather than a behavior caused by an impulsive solicitation. This change of perspective could favor the passage of the gambler from a passive role (*addictus*) to an active one from a therapeutic perspective.

Risk perception of contracting sexually transmitted infections: testing the effects of different risk-communication messages

Roberta Galizgia ¹

¹ Department of Dynamic, Clinical and Health Psychology, Sapienza University of Rome, Rome, Italy

Abstract

Introduction: Sexually Transmitted Infections (STIs) are among the most conventional infectious in young adults (WHO, 2019) and their continuous increase is the sign of a drop of the risk perception (RP) of contracting STIs. (Giuliani, 2017). In order to address this growing issue, the World Health Organization (WHO) is currently developing a preventive evidence-based intervention (WHO, 2018) that aims, by 2030, to end the STIs epidemic as a major public health concern. This study examined before whether a match between the orientation of an individual (promotion vs. prevention) and the type of communication message (fit vs. unfit) leads to higher or lower RP of STIs. The study finally investigated what kind of message-framing (prevention vs. promotion) is more persuasive in increasing STIs RP. *Method:* The study employed a 2 (promotion vs. prevention) x 2 (fit vs. unfit) between-subjects factorial design. A sample of 547 Italian young adults (425 females and 122 males) participated in the compilation of an anonymous questionnaire in which, randomly, they were assigned to the promotion or prevention condition: the participants read a flyer containing a message frame that fitted or did not fit their previous condition (promotion vs. prevention). Subsequently, participants were asked to answer questions about their RP of contracting STIs. *Results:* The results of the study revealed no statistically significant difference in the persuasive efficacy between fit vs. unfit conditions on the RP of STIs [$F(3, 499)=1.61, p=.18, \eta^2p=.010$]. However, the prevention group showed a greater RP of contracting STIs ($M=1.71, SD=.85$) than the promotion one ($M=1.58, SD=.73$). *Conclusions:* The findings would suggest that an effective public sexual health campaign should rely on prevention-frame messages in motivating people to engage in healthy sexual behaviors.

Premature fathers: the effect of severity of prematurity on early postpartum depression and parenting stress

Federica Genova¹, Alessandro Oro¹

¹ Università di Bologna - Dipartimento di Psicologia

Abstract

Premature birth has been widely recognized as a risk factor for perinatal depression and distress, with implication for early dyadic interaction and child development (Neri et al., 2015; Ouwendijk-Andréa et al., 2019). However, most of the existing studies explored the effect of prematurity, without considering its severity, as in case of birth weight less than 1500 or 1000 grams (Very Low Birth Weight-VLBW and Extremely Low Birth Weight-ELBW, respectively). Furthermore, studies usually focused on mothers, while less attention was paid on preterm fathers. So, exploring the impact of severity of prematurity on early levels of perinatal postpartum depression and parenting stress in fathers can help to develop effective interventions. At 3 months postpartum (corrected age for preterm infants), we recruited 232 fathers, differentiated in 49 fathers of ELBW, 67 of VLBW and 116 of Full Term (FT) infants. Paternal depression was assessed by the *Edinburgh Postnatal Depression Scale* (EPDS; Cox et al., 1987), while distress with the *Parental Stress Index-Short Form* (PSI-SF; Abidin, 1995). Specifically, the PSI-SF yields a Total Stress score from three scales: *Parental Distress* (PD), *Parent-Child Dysfunctional Interaction* (P-CDI), and *Difficult Child* (DC). Differences among birth weight groups were investigated by ANOVA. Preliminary results revealed no significant differences on EPDS scores among ELBW, VLBW and FT fathers. Similarly, the PSI-SF total scores were comparable among groups; while regarding PSI-SF subscales scores, significant differences emerged only on parental distress scores, with significantly higher levels for ELBW fathers than VLBW ones ($F(2,224) = 6.680, p = .002$). Despite preliminary, findings suggests that a premature birth in relation to its severity may led to different emotional reactions in fathers; particularly, fathers of severely preterm infants seem to experience greater stress in emotionally handling and adapting to their parental role.

University psychological counseling services. A picture from pre- and during the COVID-19 pandemic

Giulia Gizzi¹

¹ Dipartimento di Filosofia, Scienze Sociali, Umane e della Formazione, Università di Perugia

Abstract

The Covid-19 pandemic represented a major crisis moment for Italy, especially for university students. The introduction of online teaching, the condition of confinement, the lack of relationships had a significant impact on their mental health. The aim of the study is to assess the mental health of Italian college students who referred to the university psychological service (Focus). 232 university students (18-30years; $M=22.76$, $SD=2.316$; 20.9% male) asked support between February 2019 and March 2021 and filled in the DSM-5 Self-Rated Level 1 Cross-Cutting Symptom Measure and the Rosenberg Self-Esteem (RSES). The group was divided according to the time of access to the service before and during the COVID-19 pandemic. Descriptive statistics showed that depression and anger were the highest symptoms referred, in general, followed by sleep disturbance in pre-COVID-19, and anxiety symptoms during the Covid-19 phase. T-tests for independent samples show statistically significant differences between the two groups in the Mania ($t = 2.78$ $p = .006$), Somatic Symptoms ($t = -1.98$ $p = .049$), Psychosis ($t = -2.45$ $p = .015$) and Substance Use ($t = 2.46$, $p = .014$). Specifically, during the pandemic, students show higher levels of Somatic Symptoms and Psychosis. In contrast, in the pre-pandemic period, students showed higher levels of Mania and Substance Use. With regard to self-esteem, students who accessed to Focus during the pandemic showed higher level of self-esteem ($t = -2.42$, $p = .016$). Results suggest that there were no major differences with regard to symptom domains in the pre-pandemic period and during the Covid-19. The most striking differences seem to be related to restrictions and difficulties in planning for the future, as shown for example by the low Mania scale scores reported by students during the pandemic. Counseling services for college students should consider such issues for assessment and intervention planning.

Psychosomatic determinants in chronic kidney diseases

*Federica Guerra*¹

¹ Postgraduate School of Clinical Psychology, Department of Life, Health and Environmental Sciences, University of L'Aquila, Italy

Abstract

Introduction: Chronic Kidney Diseases (CKD) is a chronic medical condition characterized by a progressive and irreversible loss of kidney function. The clinical pathway to care involves a series of clinical treatments and interventions that can often be stressful for the patient, causing various psychological and social problems. Our study aimed to analyze the emotional impact of patients with CKD during dialysis and identify possible psychological factors that can predict better resilience and management of their clinical condition. *Methods:* A pilot study was conducted on n. 35 patients diagnosed with chronic renal failure

between 32 and 79 years ($X = 55.4$; $sd = \pm 11.32$), at the S. Salvatore Hospital in L'Aquila (Italy) during dialysis therapy. All patients were screened for emotional evaluation. The psychological battery was composed of n. 2 tests for the evaluation of emotional variables (depression, anxiety and stress, DASS-21; psychological distress, PDI) and a test for the evaluation of personality traits (acceptability, conscientiousness, extroversion, emotional stability, and mental openness, BFI-10). *Results*: Our study highlights that dialysis patients show signs of psychological distress ($x = 26.1$; $ds \pm 7.9$) and slight signs of anxiety ($x = 8.46$; $ds \pm 6.3$); however, from the analysis of variance no significant differences emerged between the clinical and emotional variables but the same showed significant correlations with some personality characteristics and with extroversion. *Conclusions*: Knowing the personality characteristics in clinical practice can be useful to identify the risk for the dialysis patient of developing emotional distress during the clinical path and at the same time, identifying are the strengths to increase emotional well-being.

Child-teacher relationship moderates the influence of microaggressions on social skills among school-age children of sexual minority parents

*Eleonora Innocenzi*¹

¹ Dipartimento di Lettere e Filosofia, Università degli Studi di Roma "Tor Vergata"

Abstract

Introduction: Children of sexual minority parents (SMPs) may experience microaggressions (i.e., subtle slights) due to their family structure. Very little is known, however, on the impact on their social skills during middle childhood – when children of SMPs grasp the meanings of their family and their social world expands – and potential moderating factors.

Method: 33 children and their 66 gay fathers through surrogacy, and 37 children and their 74 mothers through donor insemination were visited at home twice, at a distance of about 18 months: when children were aged 6–12 years (W1) and 7.5–13.5 years (W2). Also, 55 teachers took part. Children (36 girls) were interviewed about their microaggression experiences and rated the relationship with their teachers at W1, whereas parents and teachers rated child social skills at W2.

Results: More intense microaggressions, $b = -1.85$, $SE = 0.92$, $p = .047$, and lower child-teacher relationship quality, $b = 0.17$, $SE = 0.08$, $p = .047$, at W1, as well as a younger age, $b = 0.13$, $SE = 0.05$, $p = .008$, resulted in fewer parent-reported social skills at W2. Also, the interaction between microaggressions and child-teacher relationship quality was significant, $b = 0.41$, $SE = 0.07$, $p < .001$. The follow-up Johnson-Neyman technique indicated that more intense microaggressions predicted fewer social skills among children who reported a lower child-teacher relationship quality, but more social skills

among those who reported a greater child-teacher relationship quality. Teacher-reported social skills confirmed these results.

Conclusions: The findings highlighted the crucial role of the child-teacher relationship quality for the development of good social skills in children of SMPs who experience microaggressions due to their assisted conception and /or their parents' sexual orientation. This work advocates greater equality for children and their parents in a diverse array of family types, while informing both educational policy and practice.

Change process in psychotherapy: a content analysis of therapists' perspectives

*Gloria Lagetto*¹

¹Department of History, Society and Human Studies, University of Salento, Lecce

Abstract

Given the growing literature exploring the patient's experience of therapeutic change process, the present work intends to contribute to the expanding knowledge on the topic by exploring the clinicians' representations regarding (1) nature of therapeutic change, (2) helpful aspects to promote it, (3) hindering aspects and (4) strategies for overcoming problematic aspects. Twenty therapists (55% women, age: $M = 43$, $SD = 7.9$) belonging to four therapeutic approaches were selected. Data were collected through a semi-structured interview based on the principles of the Change Interview (Elliott, 1996). A twofold procedure was followed for content analysis: an inductive coding, where 10 coders segmented the text into ideational units labeled and then grouped according to a hermeneutic procedure in order to obtain a category system; and a deductive coding, where the text was segmented into textual units recoded by 8 judges (Cohen's $K = 0.76$) using the category system obtained. Regarding the nature of therapeutic change, 10 categories were identified, with increased mentalization and adaptive skills cutting across approaches. Regarding the helpful aspects, six categories were found to be most useful in producing a change in the patient, with across-school agreement about the relevance of technical operations and management of therapeutic relationship. Schools also agrees that, among the six categories emerged regarding hindering aspects, client poor affective and cognitive resources and the incidence of contextual variables have greater weight, and that dealing with these hindering factors is facilitated by a mentalizing clinical attitude. Despite some differences, our results support the idea that therapists of different orientations share an overlapping view regarding the investigated macro-themes, in accordance with the evidence proposed by common factor studies. Implications and possible developments are discussed.

Intimate partner violence, complex trauma, and attachment

Marianna Liotti¹, Maria Quintigliano¹, Alexandro Fortunato¹

¹Department of Dynamic and Clinical Psychology, and Health Studies, Sapienza University, Rome, Italy

Abstract

Introduction: Intimate Partner Violence (IPV) is one of the most experienced forms of violence in the female population. It is still unclear which are the main factors that increase the risk of experiencing IPV. Attachment disorganization and a history of complex trauma seem to be risk factors for IPV victimization in adulthood. They also could play a role in the difficulty of estranging oneself from abusive relationships. Most of the studies that have used attachment theory to investigate IPV focused on romantic attachment and only used self-report measures. This study aims to investigate the presence of Complex Trauma in IPV victims and their attachment representations. *Method:* 30 IPV victims, all women above 18 years old, were recruited in support centres and shelter services and compared to 30 controls. After collecting some anamnestic information, Adult Attachment Interview (AAI) was administered to examine attachment state of mind, and Complex Trauma Questionnaire (ComplexTQ), in the self-report form, was filled out by the subject to investigate the presence and severity of adverse childhood interpersonal experiences. AAI were conducted by two interviewers, then transcribed verbatim and coded by two trained researchers. The coders also filled in the clinician version of ComplexTQ. *Results:* IPV women showed significantly higher levels of Complex Trauma compared to controls, and they reported a higher frequency of disorganized states of mind. *Conclusions:* These results show the important role of traumatic experiences and attachment in increasing the risk of experiencing IPV in adulthood and put the basis to develop more suitable interventions, also focused on the recognition of traumatic childhood.

Cancer risk perception, cancer worry and coping strategies: a preliminary survey in a group of women undergoing genetic test for cancer susceptibility

Lucia Lombardi¹, Sonia Monique Bramanti¹, Valentina Marino¹

¹Department of Psychological, Health, and Territorial Sciences, University “G. D’Annunzio” of Chieti-Pescara, Italy

Abstract

Inherited genetic mutations may account for about 5 to 10 percent of all cancers (Tischler et al., 2019). Specific genetic tests are available for the identification of high-risk women (Stuppia, 2012), who may show high levels of stress, anxiety and depression (Lombardi et al., 2019). Furthermore, concerns and

worries about becoming ill are very high (Mellon et al., 2008) and coping strategies may play a role in psychological adjustment to this risk condition (Hamidou et al., 2017).

The current study aimed to analyze the associations of cancer risk perception, with psychological adjustment (stress, anxiety, depression), cancer worries and age. In addition, we investigated the correlations between coping strategies and cancer worries. Finally, we evaluated differences in levels of cancer worry e risk perception between cancer affected and healthy women.

A total of 36 females (mean age=47,33 years; s.d.=11,42; 44,4% cancer affected), tested for cancer genes, completed the measures of socio-demographical data, perceived stress (PSS), psychological adjustment (HADS), coping strategies (COPE-NVI) and cancer worry (CWS-GC).

Using Pearson's correlation, we found that perceived cancer risk was positively associated with cancer worry ($r=.464$, $p=.004$), anxiety levels ($r=.479$, $p=.003$) and depressive levels ($r=.451$, $p=.006$), and not associated with stress and age. In addition, we found a slightly positive association of cancer worry with avoidance ($r=.373$, $p=.025$), and a negative association with positive attitude ($r=-.477$, $p=.003$).

Regarding differences in cancer worry and risk perception between affected and healthy women, no differences were found.

This preliminary study highlighted the importance of considering anxiety, depression and cancer worries during genetic counseling, regardless of age, and the importance of coping strategies in cancer worries.

The mediating effects of detachment and self-other differentiation in the relationship between childhood emotional neglect and parent-related loneliness.

*Tommaso Manari*¹

¹Department of Humanities, Social Sciences and Cultural Industries, University of Parma, Parma, Italy

Abstract

Childhood emotional neglect is a form of child maltreatment, with lasting effects on the psychological development of the individual, nevertheless it remains understudied compared to other means of maltreatment. Adolescents with a history of childhood emotional neglect are more likely to feel isolated and excluded by their parents during adolescence. However, the mediating processes underlying these associations remain largely understudied. Based on the attachment-individuation framework of adolescent development, we performed a structural equation modeling analysis to test the mediating effects of self-other differentiation and emotional detachment on the relationship between childhood emotional neglect and parent-related loneliness. Participants (535 Italian high school students) completed self-report sociodemographic questionnaires, as well as the Loneliness and Aloneness Scale for Children and Adolescents, the Childhood Trauma Questionnaire- Short Form, the Self-Other Differentiation

Scale, and the Emotional Autonomy Scale. Results indicated that self-other differentiation and emotional detachment partially and sequentially mediated the association between childhood emotional neglect and parent-related loneliness. These results have advanced our knowledge about the psychological processes underlying the attachment-individuation process during adolescence. Among adolescents with a history of childhood emotional neglect, parent-related loneliness may result as an attempt to regulate unclear interpersonal boundaries through a tendency to create an exaggerated emotional distance from parents.

Network analysis on self-harming and smartphone addiction – the role of self-control, internalizing and externalizing problems in a sample of self-harming adolescents.

*Elisa Mancinelli*¹

¹Department of Developmental Psychology and Socialization, University of Padua, Via Venezia 8, Padua, Italy

Abstract

Adolescence is defined by unbalanced biological, psychological, and societal changes where many risk-behaviors begin as adolescents still show poor self-control and regulatory capacities. Research has shown increased risk for Smartphone Addiction (SA) and Non-suicidal self-injurious (NSSI) behavior, the latter favored by a greater reliance on social networks and the Internet. These behaviors can be considered as attempts at emotion regulation, indeed critical during this developmental period. The aim of this cross-sectional study was to assess NSSI's pattern of mutual relations by evaluating the contribution posed by self-control and internalizing and externalizing problems also investigating the role acquired by SA. Age and gender differences were assessed. N=155 Italian adolescents presenting NSSI behavior (M=14.68; SD=1.65; 43.2% females) were considered. The Brief Self-Control Scale, Strength and Difficulties Questionnaire and the Self-Injurious Thought & Behaviors Questionnaire–Non-Suicidal were administered. A Network Analysis was performed assessing the organizational structure of NSSI. Age and gender differences were assessed using multivariate permutation rank tests applying multiplicity control and post-hoc comparisons by using the Wilcoxon test. The Network showed the centrality of low self-control and internalizing problems resulting as the most influential variables for NSSI. NSSI and SA, and SA and externalizing problems, were associated through low self-control, thus hypothesizing on its mediating role. Age differences were significant only as regards NSSI ($stat=-2.86$; $adj.p=.02$) diminishing as age increases. No gender differences resulted. The regulatory role of NSSI and SA is supported. Results also suggest that, albeit NSSI might decrease or cease in late adolescence, the underlining sufferance remains. Programs supporting adolescents' self-control and regulatory capacities should be promoted to favoring adjustment during this critical period.

Epistemic trust and facial trustworthiness in adolescence

Alberto Milesi¹, Francesca Locati¹

¹Dipartimento di Psicologia, Università degli Studi di Milano-Bicocca

Abstract

Introduction: Building on the conceptualization of Sperber and colleagues (2010), Fonagy and Allison (2014) introduce epistemic trust in mentalization theoretical framework as "the individual's willingness to consider new knowledge from another person as trustworthy, generalizable, and relevant to the self." This specific kind of trust can develop in attachment relationships through ostensive cues (voice tone, eye contact, and other non-verbal communications). Also, it has been shown that specific facial cues can be judged as trustworthy or untrustworthy (Oosterhof & Todorov 2008). Although these two topics have been evaluated in different developmental phases, there is no study analyzing their connection. Therefore, our purpose is to analyze the relation between facial perception of trust, epistemic trust, and mentalization.

Methods: In this study, 200 adolescents (age range 14-18) completed the Reflective Functioning Questionnaire for Youth (Duval et al., 2018) as a measure of mentalization, the Inventory of Parent and Peer Attachment (Armsden, & Greenberg, 1987) as a measure of epistemic trust, and a trustworthiness evaluation task of faces from Todorov's (2008) database.

Results: Results show a significant association between mentalization and epistemic trust, supporting the intertwining of these two concepts. Also, scores in the trustworthiness task show an association with the level of epistemic trust, supporting the idea that facial cues can represent a first step in developing trust.

Conclusions: Although the emerging of epistemic trust is influenced by different elements such as the attachment style and parents' reflective functioning, these findings suggest that facial visual cues in trustworthiness perception also play a specific role. Given such size of the sample and the simplicity of the study, further investigations are needed.

Online gaming: body disconnection predicts addictive behaviour over and beyond aggression, depression, anxiety and stress.

Alessia Musicò¹

¹Dipartimento di Scienze Della Salute (DSS), Università di Firenze.

Abstract

In recent years, research on behavioural addictions has received increasing interest, and Internet Gaming Disorder (IGD) has been included in the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders 5 (DSM-5; 2013) under the chapter “clinical conditions that require further research”. As the vast majority of online videogames imply the immersion into an alternative reality where a virtual body is also involved, the current study aims to investigate the contribution of low body awareness (i.e. low attention to sensory cues indicating bodily state) and body dissociation (i.e. low emotional connection with one’s own body) in predicting problematic videogaming (PVG), after controlling for well-known psychological correlates (i.e., internalizing symptoms, such as depression, anxiety, and stress, and externalizing symptoms such as aggression). A total of 370 online-game players (73% men; mean age 29.63 ± 7.64 years) recruited in online player communities took part in the study and were given a survey that included gaming characteristics, the DASS-21, the Aggression Questionnaire, the Body Disconnection Scale, and the IGD-9 SF. A hierarchical regression analysis showed that low body awareness and high body dissociation predicted PVG after controlling for all the other factors. A moderation analysis (Hayes’s Process Model 3) showed an interaction effect between physical aggression and body dissociation in predicting PVG. On the one hand, these results provide support to previous studies that stressed the potential association between dissociative detachment and PVG; on the other hand, the current study provides first evidence of the opportunity to focus on the integration of bodily experiences in clinical practice with people suffering from PVG.

Attachment and alexithymia as risk factors for emotional-behavioral problems in institutionalized, late-adopted and community teenagers: mixed-method multi-informant prediction models.

*Stefania Muzi*¹

¹ Department of Educational Sciences, University of Genoa.

Abstract

Introduction: Italy counts more than 50.000 adolescents placed in residential-care [RC] or late-adopted [LA] due to adverse experiences in their family of origin. Despite different life conditions of RC and LA adolescents, they both show greater vulnerability to emotional-behavioral problems and psychological risk factors -as insecure/disorganized attachment and alexithymia- compared to low-risk community peers [COM]. For the first time, this study investigated attachment and alexithymia as independent and

mutual predictors for emotional-behavioral problems in either institutionalized, late-adopted, and community adolescents, employing a mixed-method multi-informant approach.

Method: 174 adolescents ($M_{age} = 15$ years old, 53% boys) -50 RC, 33 LA, and 91 COM- were assessed in emotional-behavioral problems (total, internalizing and externalizing type) through both a parent-report and a self-report questionnaire; both attachment and alexithymia through both interviews and self-report questionnaires.

Results: General linear models of predictions were significant for all types of problems ($p < .001$). Belong to both RC or LA group was a risk factor for more total problems. Moreover, an interactive effect of attachment insecurity and more alexithymia predicted 50% more internalizing problems, while only alexithymia predicted 18% more externalizing problems in all adolescents, regardless of the belonging group (RC, LA, COM). Lastly, few discrepancies were detected according to the informant or method used.

Discussion: In conclusion, belong to the RC or LA group, higher attachment insecurity and alexithymia were all risk factors for more emotional-behavioral problems, even if they followed different pathways. Indeed, practitioners should be aware that the aforementioned risk factors showed different mechanisms of risk depending on the group, type of problems, problems' informant, or method of assessment.

Preliminary exploration of coronavirus anxiety in transplant patients

*Benedetta Muzzi*¹

¹Department of Humanistic Studies, University of Naples Federico II

Abstract

The Covid-10 outbreak has affected everyday life, mainly for patients affected by chronic illness, such as transplant recipients (Monaco et al. 2020, Lupi et al. 2020, Maher Emara et al. 2021). Several studies have highlighted that transplant patients are exposed to increased risk for distress (Pancrazio et al. 2010), depression, anxiety (Pisanti et al. 2014, De Pasquale et al. 2010), but current literature has not explored the emotive-behavioural responses to the pandemic experience. The aim of this cross-sectional study is to assess the effect of Coronavirus Anxiety (CA) in a sample of 89 solid organ transplant patients (42M, 46F, 1Non-binary; $M_{age} 49,55, \pm 12$). Transplant Effects Questionnaire (Ziegelmann et al. 2002, Pisanti et al. 2008), Coronavirus Anxiety Scale (Lee et al. 2020, Mozzoni et al. 2020), and Brief Symptom Checklist (Derogatis, 1993) were administered in April 2021. Descriptive statistics showed there were no differences for gender, age, previous infection with Sars-Cov-2 and knowing infected or deceased friends and relatives. Correlational analysis pointed out that participants with higher level of CA tend to avoid disclosure of their condition ($\rho = -.291^{**}$, $p < .01$) with an increased worry to the graft ($\rho = .243^*$,

$p < .05$). Consistently with the wide literature about general population (Chen et al. 2021), CA influences the overall mental health ($\rho = .479^{**}$, $p < .01$), and is associated with somatic phenomena ($\rho = .334^{**}$, $p < .01$), obsessive-compulsive symptoms ($\rho = .355^{**}$, $p < .01$), interpersonal sensitivity ($\rho = .288^{**}$, $p < .01$), depression ($\rho = .427^{**}$, $p < .01$), paranoid ideation ($\rho = .245^*$, $p < .05$) and psychoticism ($\rho = .230^*$, $p < .05$). It is possible that the restrained effects of pandemic observed may be ascribable on the previous experiences of isolation post-surgery procedures. These findings could support research on the peculiar resources involved by transplant patients to cope with efforts caused by pandemic with prevention and intervention practices.

The association between the perceived interpersonal rejection from parents and peers on bullying behaviours.

Carla Nasti¹, Vincenzo Paolo Senese¹

¹ Dipartimento di Psicologia, Università della Campania “Luigi Vanvitelli”

Abstract

According to the Interpersonal Acceptance-Rejection Theory (IPARTheory), individuals who experience during their lifecycle relationships perceived as unsatisfying or rejecting may develop psychological maladjustment, which is expressed by both internalizing (e.g., depression) or externalizing (e.g., hostility) problems. In this perspective, bullying behaviours, that is repetitive aggressive, violent and antisocial conducts towards peers, could be considered as the consequence of perceived rejection from significant figures. Starting from these considerations, this study examined the association between the perceived maternal and paternal rejection, peers' rejection and bullying in adolescence. To this aim, a new scale to measure perceived peers' rejection was developed and administered in combination with measures of remembrances of maternal and paternal rejection, bullying and cyber-bullying to a sample of 210 adolescents (14-18 years; 67.6% females). After computing a general bullying score, including both traditional and cyber-bullying, correlation and multiple regression analyses were carried out. Results showed that bullying was significantly but weakly associated with maternal and peer rejection ($r = .21$ and $.17$ respectively; $ps < .05$), not paternal rejection, and that when controlling for the other variables, only the association between bullying and maternal rejection was significant, $\beta = .19$, $p = .04$. Results are in line with IPARTheory and confirm the importance of interpersonal experiences on psychological adjustment, indicating that the perceived quality of the maternal relationship is related to bullying in a specific way. Moreover, data indicated that the considered interpersonal factors accounted only for a small amount of variance. This latter result seems to point to the needs of including other predictors,

such as socio-emotional skills, locus of control or personality traits, to better understand the processes that determine bullying behaviours.

Sexuality in breast cancer survivors: sexual experiences, emotions, and cognitions in a group of women under hormonal therapy.

*Filippo Maria Nimbi*¹

¹ Dipartimento di Psicologia Dinamica, Clinica e Salute, Sapienza Università di Roma

Abstract

Introduction: Earlier diagnosis and improved treatments have led to better outcomes and prolonged survivals in breast cancer, making quality of life a key issue. Sexuality represents a pillar of quality of life, although it is often neglected in cancer. The aim of the current study was to explore differences in mental health, sexual experience and related cognitive-emotional outcomes between breast cancer survivors under hormonal treatment and a matched control group.

Method: Seventy-nine women (ranged between 24-69 years) in hormonal therapy for breast cancer and 103 women extracted from a general population database completed a self-reported protocol exploring sexual functioning (FSFI) and distress (FSDS), psychopathological symptoms (SCL-90-R), emotions (PANAS, TAS-20), and cognition over sexuality (SMQ, SBDQ, and QCSASC).

Results: The current study showed an impaired sexuality in breast cancer patients compared to controls. Patients under hormonal treatment were characterized by diminished or absent sexual activity ($\chi^2=36.16$; $p<.001$), lower level of sexual functioning in all areas except for pain ($F_{(1,180)}=8.1$; $p<.01$), higher sexual ($F_{(1,180)}=10.08$; $p<.001$) and psychological distress ($F_{(1,180)}=6.23$; $p<.05$), higher scores in Difficulties in Identifying Feelings ($F_{(1,180)}=7.31$; $p<.01$) and Externally Oriented Thinking ($F_{(1,180)}=6.64$; $p<.05$), higher level of negative emotions related to sexuality ($F_{(1,180)}=11.13$; $p<.001$), and more rigid cognitions towards peculiar aspects of sexuality such as Failure Disengagement Thoughts ($F_{(1,180)}=22.01$; $p<.001$) and Age related Beliefs ($F_{(1,180)}=5.7$; $p<.05$).

Conclusion: Anticancer treatments often imply a tremendous toll on women, including early menopause induced by antioestrogens therapies. Healthcare providers should consider the sexual needs of their patients in their routine practice, striving to improve tailored treatments for breast cancer considering general and sexual health and being able to improve the quality of life.

Living kidney donation: complexity, personal experience and therapeutic adherence of a case report.

*Maria Luisa Pistorio*¹

¹ Vascular Surgery and Organ Transplant Unit, Department of General Surgery and Medical-Surgical Specialties, University Hospital of Catania

Abstract

The decision to resort to a living donation represents a delicate process from a psychological and emotional point of view. Several studies highlight the presence of a certain reluctance on the part of the recipient to accept the donation from a relative, such as a parent. The reasons for this reluctance are different and vary from one subject to another; any failure of the transplantation can lead to intense feelings of guilt in the recipient. This study analyzes the case of Fabio.

Fabio is twenty-three years old. At the age of 15, he received his mother's kidney. After only two years the organ is rejected as he stops immunosuppressive therapy (CV > 30%). Due to a deep sense of guilt, Fabio will follow a path of clinical psychological support for 12 months. He will receive a second transplant from a deceased donor.

The interviews carried out made it possible to process the sense of guilt: *"It was important for me to come here, it was a productive period. I have started a project that I am about to complete. It is a sculpture made with the boxes of anti-rejection drugs. It is a windmill, which represents clean energy, the one that is set in motion with transplantation"*.

The psychological path allowed Fabio to implement a process of symbolic elaboration, in which the refusal of drugs was transformed into a form of art created precisely from drug waste. This allowed him to have a better awareness of the importance of therapeutic adherence. A transplanted organ is a great gift and as such must be treasured for life.

Self-care, compliance and well-being in patients with arterial hypertension.

*Jessica Ranieri*¹

¹ Scuola di Specializzazione in Psicologia Clinica, Dipartimento MESVA, Università degli Studi dell'Aquila

Abstract

"Arterial hypertension is a chronic disease that affects 33% of men and 31% of women in Italy. A prevalent problem in hypertensive patients is poor adherence to medical regimens and hospital readmissions. To date, few studies have examined possible psychological factors that can improve patient

compliance and well-being. The aim of this study was to evaluate the emotional impact and quality of life related to hypertension and investigate adherence to therapies by evaluating emotional characteristics. Method. An observational pilot study was conducted. The sample was composed of 20 patients (7F, 13M) in age range 18–74 y (M $54.6 \pm ds12.78$) diagnosed with arterial hypertension. Patients were recruited on an outpatient basis during clinical follow-ups. The following psychological screening battery was administered: SC-CII, DASS-21, BFI-10, WHOQOL-BRIEF, DERS-20. Results. The results showed moderate anxiety levels and mild stress levels. The sample did not show depression signs. Non-parametric analysis showed positive correlations between Depression and Self-care Maintenance ($p = 0.04$), between Self-care Management and Anxiety ($p = 0.03$) and Stress ($p = 0.02$), between Psychological Area -WHO and Self-care Maintenance ($p = 0.04$). Conclusion. Emotional variables seem to affect the management of arterial hypertension. In particular, depression seems to affect the ability to carry out self-care behaviors to preserve the stability of the disease and prevent its complications. Anxiety and stress seem to affect the ability to manage signs, symptoms and associated complications.

Psychological screening can be an effective tool for detecting predictive factors in the management of one's health and for addressing patient-adapted support."

Meaning, determinants, and strategies to prevent problematic internet use. A qualitative study adopting adolescents' perspective.

Simone Rollo¹, Lucrezia Ferrante¹

¹ Laboratory of Applied Psychology and Intervention – Department of History, Society and Human Studies, University of Salento, Lecce (Italy)

Abstract

There is increasing social alarmism for the "being always online" of adolescents and the potential impact of Internet use on well-being, family and friendship relationship and school performance. Although there is an extensive research on Problematic Internet Use (PIU), there is a lack of agreement on the conceptualization of "problematic" use.

This work adopts a user perspective, recognizing adolescents as competent narrators of the meaning that Internet assumes in their own experience. A total of 70 high Italian students from the 9th and 11th grade ($M_{age} = 15,53 \pm 1,202$; Female: 44,4%) attending four schools were recruited and invited to discuss about three main areas using focus group setting: (A) characteristics/symptoms of PIU; (B) causes of PIU; (C) possible strategies to prevent/contrast PIU. A qualitative method of analysis was applied to the verbatim transcripts by six independent researchers. Specifically, Thematic Analysis was applied to

identify and organize systematically the students' narratives into pattern of meanings (i.e., themes). Eleven themes related to PIU were identified: (1) PIU definition, (2) symptomatology, (3) determinants, (4) impact of PIU, (5) impact of general Internet use, (6) intervention strategies, (7) regulation strategies, (8) protective factors, (9) online-offline comparison, (10) view of the offline context and (11) view of the online context. Findings suggest that adolescents are able to express clear implicit models and theories on PIU and adolescents' narratives, showing the awareness of the negative impact that certain attitudes towards the online world could have on one's life and also respect to the context in terms of social, emotional and relational needs to which the Internet would respond.

The role of adult attachment and alexithymia in the dyadic adjustment.

Annunziata Romeo¹, Agata Benfante¹

¹Department of Psychology, University of Turin.

Abstract

Several previous studies have pointed out the significant association between adult attachment and marital relationships, as well as the role that alexithymia could play in the relational problems in intimate relationships (Ozmen et al., 2010; Epözdemir, 2012).

The main aim of the present study was to investigate the predictive role of sociodemographic characteristics, anxiety and avoidance attachment dimensions, and alexithymia in the marital adjustment of individuals in a romantic relationship.

In order to reach this goal, 409 participants were asked to fill in the following measures: (1) Dyadic Adjustment Scale (DAS); (2) Toronto Alexithymia scale (TAS-20); and (3) Experience in Close Relationship Scale (ECR-12).

With regard to sociodemographic characteristics, our group of participants had a mean (SD) age of 34.4 (13.6) years; 75% (308) were female, 70% (285) had a degree or a postgraduate qualification, and 34% (138) had children. Moreover, our participants reported a relationship duration of 142.4 (150.7) months. As far as dyadic adjustment was concerned, a hierarchical multiple regression analysis was performed to evaluate which among the investigated factors (age, gender, educational level, having/not having children, alexithymia, and anxiety and avoidance attachment dimensions) could significantly predict the DAS total score. Results showed that having/not having children ($\beta = 0.13, p = .020$) and ECR 'Avoidance' subscale ($\beta = -0.55, p < .001$) were significant predictors in the final model. The final model explained 38% of the variance [$F(10, 398) = 24.76, p < .001$].

The results of the present study revealed that not having children and reporting higher scores on attachment avoidance were associated with lower levels of dyadic adjustment.

These findings have important implications for clinicians who might help individuals that experience conflicts with their own partner by prompting a psychological treatment that takes these factors into account.

**Psychological distress of inmates in San Vittore prison during the COVID-19 lockdown.
Qualitative content analysis of posts published on the blog L'oblò.**

Antonia Sorge¹, Chiara Fusar Poli¹, Emanuela Saita¹

¹Dipartimento di Psicologia, Università Cattolica del Sacro Cuore, Milano, Italia

Abstract

Introduction: On 9 March 2020 – due to the rapid increase of COVID-19 infections – the Italian government declared a nationwide lockdown. Then, the Italian penitentiary system was heavily shaken by serious riots, originally broke out in Lombardy. The scarcity of activities, the increased time spent in cells and little or no contact with other people and the outside world, had mimic solitary confinement. The addition of such factors to people already deprived of their liberty further increased the psychological and behavioral reactions of inmates compared to people in the community. The aim of the current study was to explore the psychological consequences of COVID-19 lockdown among inmates in a Lombardic prison.

Method: This study involved 17 men detained in San Vittore prison (Milan, ITALY) from 1 March to 4 May 2020, corresponding to the lockdown phase in Italy. Given the impossibility of entering prison, 27 posts written by participants during that period and published on the prison blog “L’Oblò” were analyzed through the qualitative content analysis.

Results: The analysis allowed the identification of two major categories of content: cognitions and emotions about COVID-19 lockdown in prison. The blog post content was predominately negative in terms of emotions. The most frequent negative emotions were missing, worry, psychological pain and fear, while the most frequent positive emotions were hope and gratitude towards the prison workers’ support received.

Conclusions: Knowing the experiences of inmates during the COVID-19 pandemic allow us to consider information that can lead to improvements for future emergencies in the detention context. In fact, despite the negative emotions that the lockdown has caused, being placed in a prison ward with a higher level of attention by prison workers also allowed participants to experience a positive attitude. Moreover, this study made it possible to raise awareness about a low-cost and easy tool that can help people in prison to make their voices heard.

Adult attachment, loneliness, COVID-19 risk perception and perceived stress during COVID-19 pandemic: a mediational model.

*Tommaso Trombetta*¹

¹ Dipartimento di Psicologia, Università degli Studi di Torino

Abstract

Covid-19 pandemic spread all over the world, imposing social and economic limitations, and impacting individual's psychological wellbeing. Drawing from the attachment theoretical perspective, the current paper aimed to understand individual differences in distress response to Covid-19 pandemic, analyzing emotional and cognitive factors involved.

A cross sectional study was conducted assessing the complex relation between attachment anxiety and avoidance, loneliness, Covid-19 risk perception, and perceived stress during Covid-19 pandemic. The following assessment tools were administered: the Experiences in Close Relationships 12; Revised UCLA Loneliness Scale; the risk perception scale by COVID-19; the Perceived Stress Scale. Seven hundred sixty-one participants (81.3% females) aged between 18 to 76 years ($M = 29.35$, $SD = 11.39$) were involved. Data were analyzed through Path Analysis.

In line with the attachment theory, the results demonstrated that attachment anxiety shows both a direct ($\beta = .18$; $p < .01$), and indirect (via feelings of loneliness and COVID-19 risk perception) effect on perceived stress ($\beta = .07$; $p < .01$).

Similarly, attachment avoidance shows a direct ($\beta = .43$; $p < .01$) and indirect (via feelings of loneliness and COVID-19 risk perception) effect on perceived stress ($\beta = .08$; $p < .01$).

Our findings demonstrated the influence of adult attachment on perceived stress during Covid-19 pandemic through its effect on emotional and cognitive variables, providing useful information for the implementation of interventions aimed at promoting individual well-being in these times of health emergency.

Emotion dysregulation and disturbed eating in adolescents: a systematic review.

*Mariacarla Vacca*¹

¹ Department of Psychology, Sapienza University of Rome, 00185, Rome, Italy

Abstract

Introduction: emotion dysregulation (ED) is very frequently observed in young individuals with disturbed eating (DE) symptoms¹. This study proposes a systematic review examining the association between ED

and DE in adolescents. *Method:* inclusion criteria were: adolescent participants (10 to 19 years of age)², the use of self-reported measures of ED, the use of a well-validated measure of DE, and reporting association between ED and DE aspects. Four electronic databases (PsychINFO, PsycARTICLES, MEDLINE, CINAHL) were systematically searched for quantitative studies published until March 2021 using the following key search terms: (emotion regulation or emotion dysregulation or regulation of emotion or emotional regulation) AND (eating disorders or eating disorder or disordered eating) AND (adolescents or teenagers or teen or youth or adolescence). *Results:* a total of 593 articles were obtained and 28 (n=22 cross sectional; n=6 longitudinal) out of the 132 eligible full-text papers met the eligibility criteria. Nineteen studies included mixed gender samples, and 4 studies were conducted on clinical participants presenting DE. The most used ED and DE measures respectively were Difficulties in Emotion Regulation Scale³ and Eating Disorder Inventory⁴. Twenty-one articles evaluated specific ED domains, whereas the remaining examined a general index of emotional difficulties. All the studies found significant positive associations between emotion regulation problems and dysfunctional eating. *Conclusions:* ED may be confirmed as risk factors for eating disorders in adolescents. More longitudinal studies are needed to assess if ED confers vulnerability for problematic eating in adolescents. Treatment and preventive programs for adolescents at risk of eating disorder should target emotion regulation skills and reduce the use of maladaptive strategies⁵.

Effects of the “Maudsley eating disorder collaborative care skills intervention” on parental dyadic coping.

*Denise Vagnini*¹, *Umberto Mazza*², *Ettore Corradi*²

¹Department of Psychology, Catholic University of the Sacred Heart, Milan

²ASST Grande Ospedale Metropolitano Niguarda, Milan

Abstract

Introduction: A daughter's diagnosis of anorexia nervosa has a considerable impact on interpersonal relationships within the family and the coping strategies adopted by the parents can act as a protective factor in the treatment process. The “Maudsley Eating Disorder Collaborative Care Skills Intervention” consists in a structured set of meetings which aim to provide caregivers with functional skills to better support their child suffering from an eating disorder.

Through a pre-post-intervention comparison, the purpose of this longitudinal study was to verify any improvement in the effectiveness of dyadic coping skills perceived by parents whose daughter was diagnosed with anorexia nervosa (according to DSM-5 criteria).

Methods: The research was conducted between April and June 2019 in a Center for the Treatment of Eating Disorders at a public hospital in northern Italy. Participants were recruited by clinicians during the daughter's inpatient treatment and the study was approved by the Scientific Committee of the participating institution. To be included in the project, participants had to be fluent in Italian.

Participation was voluntary and all the parents involved returned a signed written consent form. Five parental couples (N=10) were included in the research.

At the beginning (T0) and at the end (T1) of the intervention was administered the Dyadic Coping Questionnaire (DCQ), a self-report scale used to measure the perceived mutual support. Statistical analyses were conducted using IBM SPSS in order to examine scores' differences in the DCQ over time.

Results: Results showed more effective dyadic coping styles at the end of the intervention, especially for parents who have attended most of the 7 two-hours meetings scheduled.

Conclusions: It emerges important evidence for clinical practice. Some limitations affect the study: the presence of dropouts and the small sample size limit the generalizability of these findings. Future research studies are needed to overcome this lack.

Effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on Post-traumatic Stress Disorder symptoms in adolescence: The role of emotional autonomy and trust among peers.

*Anna Lisa Amodeo*¹, *Concetta Esposito*¹, *Rosario Ambrosio*¹

¹Department of Humanistic Studies, University of Naples "Federico II"

Abstract

Background: The COVID-19 outbreak and lockdown has significantly impacted the lives of adolescents, increasing the development of chronic and acute stress, anxiety and depression.

In addition to capturing children and adolescents' mental health status during the COVID-19 pandemic, it is crucial to identify key risk and protective factors to further understand what could be done to protect them against mental health problems. This study investigates the role of adolescents' emotional autonomy (separation and detachment from parents) and trust in peers on the development of Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder symptoms (PTSD) related to COVID-19. All the effects are controlled for adolescent age and sex.

Methods: A cross-sectional online survey of 426 high school students was conducted in March 2021 (mean age = 16.66, standard deviation = 1.75; 44% males). Participants completed the Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder Related to COVID-19 Questionnaire (Forte et al., 2020; seven-factor structure: Intrusion, avoidance, negative affect, anhedonia, dysphoric arousal, anxious arousal, and externalizing behavior),

the Italian versions of the Emotional Autonomy Scale (Meleddu & Scalas, 2002) and the Trust in peer scale (Baiocco et al., 2009).

Results: The repeated measures Analysis of Variance showed that participants reported higher levels of anhedonia, avoidance, and anxious and dysphoric arousal. The hierarchical regression analyses revealed a significant effect of high detachment on the development of PTSD symptoms related to Covid-19, whereas separation was a protective factor only in relation to intrusion, avoidance, negative mood and anxious arousal. Trust in peer was significantly associated with all outcomes but avoidance and anxious arousal.

Conclusions: The study's findings highlight the importance of the separation/individuation process during adolescence and the positive quality of peer relationships in preventing maladaptive outcomes during public health crisis.

Exploring the associations between students' sexual minority status, perceptions of university climate and negative health and academic outcomes.

Anna Lisa Amodeo¹, Concetta Esposito¹ Dario Bacchini¹

¹Department of Humanistic Studies, Sinapsi Center, University of Naples "Federico II"

Abstract

Background: Research on campus climate at colleges and universities has largely increased in the US during the last decades, indicating that students from sexual minorities generally perceive Higher Education contexts as unwelcoming. These negative perceptions are associated with negative health and academic outcomes. In Italy, studies documenting how sexual minority students experience university environments, how they feel on campus, and how academic experiences are associated with mental health and academic success remain limited. The current study aimed to expand on previous knowledge by investigating the associations between students' sexual minority status, perceptions of campus climate and psychological (anxiety–depression), and academic outcomes (academic success and considering leaving the university).

Method: A sample of 868 university students (17.9% from sexual minority) were recruited. They were invited to participate in an online survey including: ad hoc items selected from prior literature measuring campus climate perceptions; the Adult Self-Report scale (Rescorla & Achenbach, 2004) for the measure of anxiety-depression; the academic and intellectual development scale developed by Pascarella and Terenzini (1980).

Results: The structural equation model showed an adequate fit to the data, $\chi^2(88) = 337.61$, $p < .001$, CFI = .95, RMSEA = .06. The results indicated that sexual minority status was associated with negative

perceptions of campus climate, which, in turn, were associated with higher levels of anxiety–depression symptoms ($b = .06, p < .05$), lowered intellectual and academic success ($b = -.08, p < .05$), and a high probability of considering leaving university ($b = .06, p < .05$).

Conclusions: Further research is needed to investigate the experience of sexual minority students within European Higher Education contexts and to explore possible actions that could contribute to fostering a greater sense of belonging to the campus community for all students.

Moral distress and COVID-19: the experience of Italian nurses during pandemic.

Ersilia Auriemma¹, Carmela Girardi¹, Roberta Salsano¹, Roberta Vitale¹, Daniela Lemmo²

¹ Department of Humanities, Federico II University, Naples

² Sinapsi Centre Service for Active and Participated Inclusion of Students, Federico II University, Naples

Abstract

Covid-19 pandemic has influenced psychological wellbeing of nurses, contributing to the increase of moral distress (Morley et al., 2020; Silverman et al., 2021).

Jameton (1984) initially defined moral distress as distress experienced when nurses are prevented by doing the right thing due to institutional constraints (Jameton, 1984).

Morley et al. (2020a) assume a broader vision of this concept, suggesting different events related to moral distress: constraint, dilemma, uncertainty, conflict, and tension. In particular, during Covid-19 pandemic, nurses could have experienced moral distress due to conflict between the task of addressing care and the need of preserving their own safety (Morley et. al., 2020b).

The aim of this study was exploring moral distress of nurses during Covid-19 pandemic.

We conducted an ad hoc semi-structured interview to 43 nurses asking them to narrate two episodes of moral distress (related to patients-care, related to self-care). We also administered Moral Distress Thermometer (Wocial & Weaver, 2013) for understanding how much moral distress nurses have experienced.

We conducted a theory driven analysis, using the categories proposed by Morley.

Among 43 nurses, 40 answered to question related to patients-care, 36 answered to question related to self-care, for a total of 76 episodes.

Results show high levels of moral distress measured with MDT among nurses. Moral distress connected to patients-care values is prevalently due to moral constraint, while moral distress connected to self-care values is prevalently due to moral dilemma. Five episodes show moral distress due to none of the events considered: we suggest identifying these as *moral impotence*.

Results can contribute to understand nurses' moral distress experience, in order to improve interventions for preventing moral distress and promoting moral resilience.

Facial emotion recognition behind the mask

Marco Bani¹, Selena Russo¹, Stefano Ardenghi¹, Giulia Rampoldi¹, Maria Grazia Strepparava¹

¹ School of Medicine and Surgery, University of Milano – Bicocca, Milan, Italy

Abstract

Introduction: The current widespread facemasks usage to prevent the spread of the SARS-CoV-2 virus deeply impacts our interactions in both ordinary life and clinical settings. It is relevant for clinical practice to assess whether facemask wearing affect healthcare professionals' ability to accurately identify others' facial emotional expressions and the psychological variables that can modulate this ability such as attachment style and empathy.

Method: In this cross-sectional study, 429 healthcare students (223 medical and 206 nursing) completed: 1) the Diagnostic Analysis of Nonverbal Accuracy FACES2 adult faces (DANVA2-AF), 2) the 4-item Relationships Questionnaire, and 3) the brief form of the Interpersonal Reactivity Index. The students were randomly assigned to the masked or unmasked version of DANVA2-AF.

Results: There was a statistically significant higher error rate in the masked compared to the unmasked condition for both high intensity emotions ($F=337.29$, $p < .001$) and low intensity emotions ($F=178.09$, $p < .001$). In the masked condition, there was also a significant negative correlation between errors in the facial emotion recognition task and the Secure attachment style ($p = .026$) and a positive correlation with the Fearful attachment style ($p = .046$). Misattribution of sad faces were significant negative correlated with empathic concerning.

Conclusion: Wearing facemask reduces the competence to recognize facial emotional expression and modulates the effects of psychological dimensions (attachment style and empathy) on this ability. Misinterpretation of facial emotions can severely impact healthcare professional-patient relation and communication. It is important to improve awareness in healthcare professionals and compensate the detrimental effect of mask wearing in facial emotion recognition with specific trainings and informational material.

Depression, quality of life and well-being as covariates of blood pressure among patients with hypertension and metabolic syndrome

Agostino Brugnera ¹, Angelo Compare ¹, Stefano Omboni ², Andrea Greco ¹, Silvia Carrara ¹,
Giorgio Angelo Tasca ^{1,3}, Barbara Poletti ⁴, Gianfranco Parati ^{5,6}

¹ Department of Human and Social Sciences, University of Bergamo, Bergamo, Italy

² Department of Cardiology, Sechenov First Moscow State Medical University

³ School of Psychology, University of Ottawa, Ottawa, Canada

⁴ Department of Neurology and Laboratory of Neuroscience, IRCCS Istituto Auxologico Italiano, Milan, Italy,

⁵ School of Medicine and Surgery, University of Milan-Bicocca, Milan, Italy

⁶ Istituto Auxologico Italiano, IRCCS, Department of Cardiovascular, Neural and Metabolic Sciences, San Luca Hospital, Milan, Italy

Abstract

Background: Previous research provides support for the role of psychosocial variables in the progression of hypertension. However, few studies have rigorously tested the longitudinal interplay between blood pressure and depressive symptoms, quality of life and well-being. Further, only some of them have disaggregated the effects on essential hypertension of changes in these psychological variables within patients over time from the impact of differences in other individual features between patients.

Methods: A total of 185 patients with hypertension and metabolic syndrome (130 males, 70.3%; mean age 54 ± 10.93 years) volunteered for this multicentre study. We analyzed the longitudinal associations between office or day-time ambulatory blood pressure with depressive symptoms, well-being and quality of life, measured at the same three time points (baseline, 36- and 48-week follow-up), through multilevel models and controlling for several sociodemographic and clinical factors.

Results: Within-person increases in depressive symptoms were significant, positive time-varying covariates of both office and day-time blood pressure, even after controlling for several potential confounders (e.g., age, sex, changes over time in risk factors for Metabolic Syndrome). Within-person increases in well-being and mental health components of quality of life had similar negative associations with the level of blood pressure over time. Between person differences in these variables tended not to predict blood pressure.

Conclusions: Our findings provide a deeper insight on the relationship between variability of psychological variables within individuals and their levels of blood pressure. The findings support the need for health services to implement evidence-based psychological interventions that can foster a better management of the hypertensive disease.

Feeling in touch. Postpartum experience during pandemic: a qualitative research

Alessia Caffieri ¹, Giorgia Margherita ¹

¹ Dipartimento di Studi Umanistici, Università degli Studi di Napoli “Federico II”, Napoli

Abstract

Covid-19 had a negative impact on psychological health of women in postpartum period both worldwide (Fan et al., 2020) and in Italy (Caffieri & Margherita, submitted). In particular, studies show increasing depression and Ptsd in women who delivered during the pandemic (Molgora & Accordini, 2020; Zanardo et al., 2020). Although, one year after coronavirus outbreak, there is still little qualitative research aimed at exploring the experiences lived by women, especially in the Italian context (Fumagalli et al., 2021).

Eight women in the first trimester of postpartum, were selected through a snowballing procedure, during the second year of the pandemic spread. The mothers were interviewed through a semi-structured interview and their narratives were analysed accordingly to the principles of Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA).

The analysis of the interviews yielded the following superordinate themes: *The confusing spiral of confinement; Pandemic scenarios and the perinatal medical context; “Get in touch”*. A transversal theme labelled *“From isolation to loneliness”* emerged as well.

The results highlight the traumatic impact of the Covid-19 on psychological dynamics which involved postpartum women. In particular, loneliness seems to be an emotion which crosses the entire perinatal period, from pregnancy to childbirth and postpartum. Loneliness seems to be linked to a deep need of “contact”, which is only partially compensated by online sharing.

The conclusions lead to reflect on psychological intervention programmes for postpartum women, in order to identify the limits and possible resources to promote psychological health in perinatal period.

Application of a clinical training based on mindfulness in children with attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD)

Cristina Liviana Caldiroli ¹, Andrea Mangiatordi ¹, Emidio Fornaro ², Fabrizia Mantovani ¹, Marco Castiglioni ¹, Alessandro Antonietti ³

Abstract

Mindfulness can be defined as the ability to pay attention intentionally, in the present moment and in a non-judgmental manner. Some studies have demonstrated its effectiveness as a clinical therapy applied

to children with ADHD, who manifest an inability to regulate their behavior according to the passage of time, the goals to be achieved and the demands of the environment.

The objective is to investigate the effects produced by the Mindfulness program “Il Fiore Dentro” in children with ADHD. It is hypothesized to find differences between the pre-training situation and the post-training situation in attention, executive function, working memory, hyperactivity and impulsivity. Ten children, divided into two groups, with a diagnosis of ADHD, were selected and given specific assessment instruments. Subsequently they took part in the 8 meetings of the program and at the end the tests were administered again. The research design is a mixed design: both the difference between the two groups, which excluded the possible influence of different settings and operators, and the difference between pre- and post-training tests were tested.

The training produces positive results in several dimensions: selective and sustained visuospatial attention, executive functions, visual memory, impulsivity and hyperactivity. The increase in social withdrawal is worthy of attention and could be linked to an initial stage of reorganization of one's behavior with the peer group.

The results allowed to confirm the effectiveness of Mindfulness in the treatment of ADHD in the sample that took part in the training. The limitations of the research include the small sample size, the absence of a control group and follow-up. Finally, due to the COVID-19 Pandemic (still ongoing) the research suffered in terms of data collection.

A journey through the traumatic effects and psychopathological consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic in the Italian population.

Maria Casagrande¹, Francesca Favieri², Giuseppe Forte², Renata Tambelli¹

¹ Dipartimento di Psicologia Dinamica e Clinica e Salute, “Sapienza” Università di Roma

² Dipartimento di Psicologia, “Sapienza” Università di Roma

Abstract

The COVID-19 pandemic had a severe impact on the worldwide population in the last year. To cope with the crisis, many countries have taken urgent measures to safeguard the people's health (i.e., quarantines, social distancing, border closure) that have severely affected mental health and well-being in the general population.

Several researchers highlighted associations with post-traumatic symptomatology, but no study investigated the role of psychological aspects in this relation. This study aimed to assess the direct and mediated consequences of some aspects of the COVID-19 experiences on COVID-19 related PTSD,

considering the role of several psychological dimensions (i.e., anxiety, depression, sleep disturbance, psychological well-being, and psychopathological symptomatology).

Two thousand two hundred and nineteen-one Italian respondents completed an online survey focused on the experience with the COVID-19 pandemic. Different questionnaires, assessing sleep quality, anxiety, depression, psychological well-being, general psychopathology, were administered. A mediation analysis (path analysis) was adopted.

A direct effect of the dimensions ascribable to the pandemic (COVID-19 diagnosis, the fear of the contagion, and the diagnosis of COVID-19 in loved ones) was highlighted on PTSD symptoms. Moreover, a total indirect effect emerged considering COVID-19 diagnosis and fear of contagion. The fear of contagion was significantly mediated by psychological well-being, sleep disturbance, psychopathological symptomatology, and anxiety. The effect of COVID-19 diagnosis was significantly mediated by general psychological well-being and psychopathological symptomatology. Moreover, sleep disturbance was reported as a possible mediator of the relationship between the diagnosis of COVID-19 in loved ones and PTSD symptomatology.

These findings should be adopted as a starting point to develop psychological interventions to minimize the long-term consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic.

The role of gender in influencing Palestinian children experience of military violence and access to sources of functioning.

Federica Cavazzoni¹, Guido Veronese¹, Alec Fiorini², Hala Shoman³

¹ Department of Human Sciences “R. Massa”, University of Milano-Bicocca

² School of Advanced International Studies, Johns Hopkins University, Bologna

³ Department of Anthropology, Durham University, Durham

After more than half a century of military occupation, researchers have extensively documented the impact that the exposure to violence has on the well-being of the Palestinian populations. Furthermore, within the childhood studies, scholars have revealed the many resources and strategies of resilience and resistance that children deploy to cope with the everyday violence they experience and protect their well-being. These strategies have been documented as depending on both their personal resources as well as the social, cultural, and physical contexts established by their families, communities or social settings. By acknowledging that many societies show significant gender inequalities that result in an unequal distribution of resources and opportunities, our study aims to investigate the role of gender in influencing Palestinian children's experience of military violence, access to resources to improve subjective well-being, and ability to cope with hardships. To delve into gender-related practices in children's everyday

life, our exploratory study encompassed a place-based methodology. Through drawings and walk-along interviews with 75 children coming from different contexts in both the West Bank and Gaza Strip (68% girls, 32% boys; 7-13 years), four themes were identified from participants narratives using Thematic Content Analysis: *girls' feelings of insecurity; freedom of movement and accessibility to public areas, gender attitudes and perceptions; education as a mean for equal rights*. The study highlights the role of gender hierarchies in structuring and limiting children's everyday experiences and access to resources, as well as provides insights into the many personal, local, and gendered ways in which children navigate their violent contexts. Our findings emphasize the need to delineate girls' and women agency in its own characteristics and it suggests implications for practices when designing interventions for children in contexts of chronic political violence.

Risk factors of problem gaming in adulthood: the role of depression, anxiety, time perspective, loneliness and mentalization

Maria Ciccarelli¹, Giovanna Nigro¹, Francesca D'Olimpio¹, Mariagiulia Sacco¹

¹ Dipartimento di Psicologia, Università degli studi della Campania - Luigi Vanvitelli

Abstract

Following its inclusion in the Appendix of the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM-5; APA, 2013) as a condition that needs further research, the Internet Gaming Disorder (IGD) has received an increased attention. However, the research on the etiology of IGD is still in its infancy. The aim of the present study was to investigate, for the first time, the role of mentalization, emotional distress, time perspective, and loneliness in adult gaming. Four hundred and eighty-three adults aged between 18 and 29 years ($M_{age} = 22.22$, $SD = 2.66$; 54% male) completed an online survey including the Internet Gaming Disorder Scale (IGDS9-SF), the Consideration of Future Consequences Scale (CFC-14), the Depression Anxiety Stress Scale (DASS-21), the UCLA Loneliness Scale (UCLA) and the Reflective Functioning Questionnaire (RFQ-8). Regression analysis showed that male gender, present-oriented time perspective, depression, anxiety, hypermentalizing, and loneliness were good predictors of gaming severity with the overall model explaining the 23% of the total variance ($R^2_{adj} = 0.23$; $F_{6,476} = 24.60$; $p < .001$). In order to analyse the causal relationships among variables contributing to gaming severity, a path analysis was performed. Specifically, the hypothesis according to which hypermentalizing was on the path from these variables to gaming severity was tested. The results indicated that gender predicted gaming directly, whereas present-oriented time perspective, depression, anxiety and loneliness contributed to gaming both directly and indirectly via hypermentalizing. The present study provided, for the first time, insight into the interrelationships between inaccurate mentalization, emotional distress,

time perspective, perceived loneliness, and gaming behavior, demonstrating that an excessive and inaccurate mentalization has a key role in contributing to problematic gaming.

The mediating role of empathy in the relationship between mindfulness and couple satisfaction

*Lisa Compare*¹, *Marco Fornili*², *Laura Baglietto*², *Giovanni Tumminaro*¹, *Olivia Bernini*³, *Carmen Berrocal*¹

¹ Department of Surgical, Medical and Molecular Pathology, and Critical Care Medicine, University of Pisa, Italy

² Department of Clinical and Experimental Medicine, University of Pisa, Italy

³ University Counseling Services, University of Pisa, Italy

Abstract

Previous studies showed that trait mindfulness is positively associated with couple satisfaction. However, little is known about the mechanisms through which mindfulness abilities might promote relationship satisfaction. This study explored whether empathy mediates the effect of mindfulness on couple satisfaction in emerging adults. Participants were 218 young adults (71% females; mean age = 22.2 yr, SD = 2.9) involved in a dating relationship. Subjects completed self-report measures of mindfulness (Observing, Describing, Acceptance and Acting with Awareness), cognitive and affective empathy, and couple satisfaction. The possible role of empathy as mediator of mindfulness effect on couple satisfaction was investigated by mediation analysis. All statistical tests were two-sided at a significance level of 0.05. Couple satisfaction was positively correlated with Observing and Acting with Awareness and with both components of empathy. Observing was positively correlated with cognitive and affective empathy, while Acting with Awareness was negatively associated with the affective component. Cognitive empathy mediated the effect of Observing on couple satisfaction. Acting with Awareness indirectly decreased couple satisfaction by decreasing affective empathy, but also had an outweighing positive direct effect on couple satisfaction.

Findings indicate that couple satisfaction is associated with specific facets of mindfulness in young adults. Furthermore, the ability to notice internal and external events may promote higher couple satisfaction by fostering the ability to understand how the partner feels. Acting with Awareness seems to have a double-edge effect on couple satisfaction in young adults: a positive direct effect outbalances a negative indirect effect mediated by a decrease in affective empathy.

Regulation is not enough. Analysis of flight operators' culture regarding psychological services

*Barbara Cordella*¹, *Alessandro Gennaro*¹, *Micaela Scialanga*²

¹Sapienza, University of Rome

²ITAPA- Italian Association of Aviation Psychology

Abstract

In last years the need and the demand of psychological intervention by institutions is increasing, reflecting the acknowledgment of importance of psychological interventions in promoting individual's wellbeing. Despite the huge efforts of institutions and organization to promote and offer psychological services often they are not exploited as thought. Reasons are often attributed to user's lack of confidence to psychological services. The present work takes a cue from the EU Regulation 1042/2018 requiring Airlines companies to implement Support Programmes for civil flight crews. In light of a Semiotic Cultural Psychosocial Theory we focused flight crews' perspective on the EU Regulation as encouragement for flight crews to seek psychological supports from peers and/or psychologists. A multiple-choice questionnaire was developed to detect pilots and flight attendant view of psychological supports. Retrieved questionnaires (N=793) were analyzed through Multiple Correspondence and Cluster Analysis. Two factorial dimensions have been highlighted showing participants' view about the role of psychologists and well-being respectively. Data highlight the need to develop a view on well-being and to clarify the benefits of psychologists' involvement within the organization. In its whole the work shows how the application of the EU Regulation may not be enough to encourage flight crews to contact law drawn psychological services for psychological support.

Orthorexic tendencies and healthy eating in university students: which association with eating disorders, psychopathology, and defense mechanisms?

*Giulia Costanzo*¹, *Daniela Marchetti*², *Giovanna Manna*¹, *Giorgio Falgares*¹

¹Department of Psychological, Pedagogical and Educational Sciences, University of Palermo

²Department of Psychological, Health and Territorial Sciences, University of Chieti–Pescara, Chieti

Abstract

Introduction: Orthorexia nervosa (ON) is a pathological condition characterized by an obsessional fixation on healthy diet. In order to better identify this disorder, some studies proposed to distinguish ON from other behaviors that, although still characterized by an interest in healthy eating, should not be considered pathological. Following these studies, we compared ON tendencies and non-pathological healthy-eating

behaviors with regard to specific psychological variables, such as eating disorders features, psychopathology, and defense mechanisms, with the aim of differentiating ON from non-problematic food-related behaviors.

Method: The study participants were recruited from a large university in the South of Italy; 52 comprised the ON group, while 157 comprised the healthy-eating group. This sample of 209 students included 54 men and 155 women, whose ages ranged from 18 to 37 years ($M = 21.57$, $SD = 2.16$). Participants completed four self-report instruments: Eating Habits Questionnaire-21 (EHQ-21), Eating Disorder Inventory-3 (EDI-3), Brief Symptom Inventory (BSI), and Defense Style Questionnaire-40 (DSQ-40).

Results: Results showed that ON participants were higher in all EDI-3 variables (drive for thinness, bulimia, body dissatisfaction, and overall eating disorder risk) than the healthy-eating subjects. Regarding psychopathology, ON group scored significantly higher in somatization, anxiety, paranoid ideation, psychoticism, and global severity index compared to the healthy-eating group, while no differences were found in obsession-compulsion, interpersonal sensitivity, depression, phobic anxiety, and hostility. Finally, with regard to defense mechanisms, ON participants were higher in some immature defenses (passive aggression and somatization) than healthy-eating individuals, while no differences were found in mature and neurotic defense styles.

Conclusions: These results support the existence of significant differences between ON and other (non-problematic) healthy eating behaviors.

Narcissism, self-esteem, affective states, alexithymia, and dissociation: examining predictors of binge eating behaviors among youth

*Federica Maria Arca Cristiano*¹, *Laura Piscopo*¹, *Marco Scotto Rosato*¹, *Annarosa Cipriano*¹

¹ Observatory on Eating Disorders, Department of Psychology, University of Campania “Luigi Vanvitelli”, Viale Ellittico, 31 – 81100 – Caserta, Italy

Abstract

Introduction: Binge Eating (BE) is frequently reported among early and middle adolescents. Alexithymia, dissociative episodes, narcissism, low self-esteem, and negative affect states are correlated with each other and are associated with BE. However, no studies have yet examined all these variables simultaneously. Therefore, the present study sought to address these gaps and explore the influences of such constructs on BE severity.

Methods: A sample of 122 middle and high-school students ($F=59$, 49.6%; $M_{age}=12.84$, $DS=2.04$; $M_{BMI}=21.48$, $DS=3.53$) was screened by means of self-report measures assessing narcissism, self-esteem, affective states, alexithymia, and dissociation. Correlation between variables was analyzed using Pearson's

correlation coefficient, and a Multiple Regression Analysis was conducted to determine which variables best predicted BE, accounting for sex, age, and body mass index.

Results: BE risk was positively correlated with dissociative episodes ($p < .001$), narcissistic vulnerability ($p = .001$), difficulty in identifying feelings ($p < .001$), and negative affective states ($p = .041$), whereas it was negatively correlated with self-esteem ($p < .001$). Results from the multiple regression analysis demonstrated that dissociative episodes ($\beta = .482$; $p < .001$) did significantly predict BE risk, accounting for 34.2% of the variance ($F_{(12)} = 5.584$; $p < .001$).

Discussion: BE is multi-determined, resulting from bio-psycho-social variables, and it is associated with dissociative episodes and difficulty in identifying feelings. Dissociative episodes are the only predictor of BE occurrences and can serve as a means for managing bodily feelings, and as a psychologic defense against intolerable emotional states. Our findings highlight the importance of further research and a deeper investigation of dissociation related to BE.

Subjective Emptiness Scale-Italian version (SES-I): psychometric properties of a self-report scale assessing the feeling of emptiness

*Alessandra D'Agostino*¹, *Raffaele Pepi*¹, *Mario Rossi Monti*¹, *Vladan Starcevic*², *Adrian Price*³

¹ Department of Humanities, University of Urbino "Carlo Bo"

² University of Sydney, Faculty of Medicine and Health, Sydney Medical School, Nepean Clinical School, Sydney, Australia

³ California State University San Marcos, CA, USA

Abstract

Introduction: A feeling of emptiness has been found in people with various mental disorders and, therefore, it can be described as a transdiagnostic symptom. However, there is a paucity of instruments assessing this phenomenon. This study aims to evaluate the psychometric properties of the Italian version of a self-report measure of the feeling of emptiness, Subjective Emptiness Scale (SES-I).

Methods: Participants from a clinical group ($n=63$, mean age 44.1 ± 12.5) and a nonclinical one ($n=48$, mean age 34.1 ± 11.5) completed the SES-I, along with PID-5, MCMI-III, SITBQ-NS and BDI-II. Principal component analysis was used to evaluate the structure of the SES-I and Mann-Whitney U test was used to test the differences between groups. Cronbach's alpha and Rho's Spearman were used to establish reliability and validity of the SES-I, respectively.

Results: The SES-I showed a unidimensional structure. Participants in the clinical group had a significantly higher mean score on the SES-I than those in the nonclinical group. Internal consistency of the scale was excellent ($\alpha = .92$). Positive and significant correlations with BDI-II and conceptually related MCMI-III

and PID-5 subscales were found, thus supporting convergent validity. Weak or null correlations with conceptually unrelated PID-5 and MCMI-III subscales partially confirm divergent validity.

Conclusions: Results suggest that SES-I is a valid and reliable instrument for assessment of the feeling of emptiness. Significant differences in SES-I scores between the two groups confirm that the feeling of emptiness is more prominent in the clinical population. Positive correlations with several PID-5 and MCMI-III dimensions also confirm the transdiagnostic nature of the feeling of emptiness. Further research is needed to clarify the relationships between the feeling of emptiness and other emotional states.

Effects of mindfulness-oriented meditation on healthy individuals' self-reported dissociative experience, mindfulness skills and interoceptive awareness

Fabio D'Antoni^{1,2}, *Susanna Feruglio*^{1,2}, *Alessio Matiz*², *Damiano Cantone*^{1,2}, *Cristiano Crescentini*²

¹Department of Psychology, Sapienza University of Rome

²Cognitive Neuroscience Laboratory, DILL, University of Udine, Udine.

Abstract

Dissociation is an involuntary defensive mechanism to protect oneself by avoiding unbearable internal conflicts or overwhelming emotions. Cultivating mindful awareness could allow the development of voluntary processes that can offer part of the self-protective function of dissociation while favouring internal integration processes. The aim of the present study was to explore the effects of a 7-week Mindfulness Oriented Meditation (MOM) training on healthy individuals' self-reported dissociative experience, mindfulness skills and interoceptive awareness. A group of 113 participants (99 females; mean age: 23.46 ± 3.3 years) attended a 7-week MOM training, while 106 participants (97 females; mean age: 22.33 ± 3.19 years) were assigned to a waiting-list control group. We administered three self-report questionnaires evaluating mindfulness skills (FFMQ), dissociative experiences (DES-II), and interoceptive awareness (MAIA) before the beginning and after the end of the 7-week MOM training. After the training, in comparison to a waiting-list control group, the MOM group showed reduced dissociative tendencies ($p < .05$), increased dispositional mindfulness ($p < .001$) and increased interoceptive awareness (not-worrying, self-regulation and body listening; $p < .001$). Moreover, correlational evidence showed that the more MOM participants increased in mindfulness skills after the training the more they reported increased interoceptive awareness and decreased dissociative functioning ($p < .05$). Mindfulness skills also improved with more home meditation practice executed by MOM participants ($p < .05$). These findings were attributed to a possible role of mindfulness meditation in enabling the development of volitional processes that afford psychological safety and integration, in contrast with the involuntary nature of dissociation.

The moderating role of autonomic flexibility on the relationship between brooding rumination and depressive symptoms

Elisa Dal Bò^{1,2}, *Carola Dell'Acqua*^{1,2}, *Simone Messerotti Benvenuti*^{1,2}, *Ettore Ambrosini*^{1,2,3}, *Antonino Vallesi*^{2,3,4},
Daniela Palomba^{1,2}

¹ Department of General Psychology, University of Padova

² Padova Neuroscience Center (PNC), University of Padova

³ Department of Neuroscience, University of Padova

⁴ Brain Imaging & Neural Dynamics Research Group, IRCCS San Camillo Hospital, Venice, Italy

Abstract

Introduction: A core feature that may contribute to the etiopathogenesis and maintenance of depression is represented by a reduced ability to regulate negative emotions, which results in prolonged states of negative affect following unpleasant events. Brooding rumination, namely the tendency toward repetitive thinking about negative information (e.g., unpleasant emotional experiences) and their consequences is characteristic of depressed mood. Heart rate variability (HRV), as a measure of autonomic flexibility, is believed to represent a proxy of the functional integrity of the neural networks implicated in both brooding rumination and depression. *Method:* The present study examined whether HRV may moderate the relation between brooding rumination and depression in 68 healthy individuals with depressive symptoms. Self-report measures of depression and brooding rumination were collected and three-minute resting-state ECG was recorded to obtain vagally mediated HRV indices. *Results:* Linear regression analyses revealed that HRV was a significant moderator of the association between depressive symptoms and brooding rumination. *Conclusion:* An integrated model is supported, in which vagally mediated HRV appeared to potentiate the positive link between depressive symptoms and brooding rumination. Considering that HRV and brooding rumination were found to have an interacting role in determining the severity of depressive symptoms, improvements of vagal modulation and metacognitive strategies aimed at reducing brooding ruminative thinking may represent potential clinical targets in the prevention and treatment of depressive symptoms.

Voice to youths: the development of the YAPEQS (young adult's pandemic experience quality)

*Barbara De Rosa*¹, *Gianluca Colella*¹, *Paola Palombo*¹, *Viviana Perla*¹, *Giorgio Regnoli*¹

¹ Dipartimento Studi Umanistici, Università degli Studi di Napoli Federico II

Abstract

Despite recent researches have classified youngsters as a high vulnerability target and open to risk factors for depressive and anxiety symptoms during the pandemic (Wang et al., 2020; Mazza et al., 2020), in the pandemic young subjects have had a smaller space to express themselves, listening and support related to their needs and specific difficulties caused by the restrictions. The present research aims at investigating the peculiarities of pandemic's feelings in young adults through the construction of a measure about the quality of the pandemic experience in young adults (YAPEQS).

A previous explorative moment has allowed to define the construct and the dimensions to investigate. This is a multifactor construct composed by four different dimensions: feelings, impact, preoccupations and emotions expressed during the three pandemic phases (Lockdown; summer 2020; second wave 2020-2021). Basing on the answers, a closed questions survey has been built (5 points Likert scales) composed from 4 sub-scales: the feelings scale (22 items), the preoccupations scale (18 items), the emotions scale (29 items), the impact scale (12 items). After the pre-testing phase, 205 Italian participants from 18 to 35 years old have answered the survey ($M = 23.95$; $SD = 3.66$). The Cronbach's alpha has been calculated to evaluate survey's reliability. The revealed alpha's value ($\alpha = .92$) suggests good internal consistency; the different sub-scales present the following alpha's values: $\alpha = .68$ (feelings); $\alpha = .84$ (preoccupations); $\alpha = .82$ (emotions); $\alpha = .68$ (impact).

Further studies are needed to validate the survey using the confirmative factorial analysis method. At the end of the validation process, the measure will be also used to assess young adults' feelings after the pandemic's end. The goal is to guide the construction of clinical settings young adults' suffering and specific needs related to the historical contingent period.

Voice to youths: a qualitative study on pandemic experience in young adults

Barbara De Rosa¹, Paola Palombo¹, Viviana Perla¹, Giorgio Regnoli¹

¹Dipartimento Studi Umanistici, Università degli Studi di Napoli Federico II

Abstract

Recent studies found that young adults reported high levels of anxiety and depression during the Covid-19 outbreak (Carlucci et al., 2020), thus they have been designed as a vulnerable group at high risk of developing psychological disorders (Mazza et al., 2020). The study aims to explore young adults' (18-35 years old) pandemic experience and at the same time to “give voice” to young people, providing them a space for listening and reflection, in which the narrative reconstruction of “their” pandemic could activate a process of signification of their experience (Margherita, 2009). This exploratory and qualitative study is the first step of the research and it was preparatory to the second step, that is a quantitative study. The

participants were 23 young adults aged between 18 and 30 years old ($M = 24.73$, $SD = 2.5$). A team of psychologists conducted semi-structured interviews that dealt with the 3 phases of the pandemic (lockdown; summer 2020; II wave autumn-winter '20-'21). The following areas were investigated: emotional experience, concerns, resources, obstacles, relationships with adults, relationship with the media and relationship with the future. The interviews were analyzed with the IPA method (Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis, Smith et al., 1999), that identifies the core dimensions, that were read in psychodynamic ways. The core dimensions that emerged from the analysis included: a traumatic connotation of the pandemic experience ("The impossible in a very short time"); an increased anguish in the second pandemic wave compared to the lockdown period ("things were better when times were harder"); control as a defense when facing powerlessness ("I control... therefore I am and will be"). The study allowed to define the construct and the dimensions which will be analysed in the second quantitative step. Moreover, the feedbacks received suggest that the interviews provided an opportunity to re-signify the experience of the pandemic.

Covid-19 pandemic: resilience and stress resistance of military healthcare personnel in an emergency situation a preliminary result

*Cinzia Di Monte*¹, *Rachele Mariani*¹, *Michela Di Trani*², *Federica Murgia*², *Nicola Sebastiani*²

¹ Department of Dynamic and Clinical Psychology, and Health Studies, University of Rome, Sapienza

² General Directorate of Military Medical Services – Defence Chief of Staff

Abstract

Introduction: During the COVID-19 pandemic in Italy, healthcare personnel had primary importance to caring for and helping the Italian population. In this context, Military Medical Services played a decisive role in managing the emergency activity to protect the health of the nation. The literature showed high burnout and a risk to develop psychosomatic symptoms in health professionals who worked during the COVID-19 emergency, but there is a lack of data about the medical military population.

This research is a first Italian survey on psychophysical status, exploring Burnout, Resilience, Symptomatology, Intolerance of Uncertainty of Military Healthcare Personnel (MHP) during the COVID-19 emergency. The aim is to identify which psychological features predict higher levels of burnout.

Method: The total sample consisted of 70 Italian MHP (59 male; average age 41, 28 years). The participants filled questionnaires through *Lime Survey*.

Results: Descriptive analysis of burnout dimensions showed that this sample has a low Emotional Exhaustion and Depersonalization score and a high Personal Achievement score according to Italian validation range.

Correlation analysis between psychological dimensions showed a high level of burnout is associated to low resilience, high intolerance of uncertainty, and emotion-oriented coping strategy. Moreover, there was a significant relationship between high burnout and psychophysical symptoms. Three multiple linear regression models were performed to investigate possible predictors of each dimension of burnout. All models of regression showed that an emotion-oriented coping strategy is the only predictor of burnout.

Conclusions: Emotion strategy is a risk factor to develop burnout during COVID-19 emergency. This aspect emphasizes the importance to implement Military training developing task-oriented, rather the emotion-oriented coping strategy.

Understanding the role of attachment styles in predicting prolonged grief disorder in family caregivers of patients in palliative care: preliminary results

*Cristina Faraone*¹, *Alberto Sardella*², *Micol Mazzei*¹, *Antonino Germanà*¹, *Caterina Testà*¹, *Carmen Isgrò*³, *Michele Gugliandolo*³, *Vittorio Lenzo*⁴

¹Palliative home care services, Sisifo—Consortium of Social Cooperatives, Catania, Italy

²Department of Clinical and Experimental Medicine, University of Messina, Messina, Italy

³Center of Research and Psychological Intervention (CeRIP), University of Messina, Messina, Italy

⁴Department of Social and Educational Sciences of the Mediterranean Area, University for Foreigners “Dante Alighieri” of Reggio Calabria, Reggio Calabria, Italy

Abstract

Introduction: This study aimed at investigating the risk of prolonged grief disorder among family caregivers of patients in palliative home care and examine the role of attachment style as key components for understanding reported symptoms.

Method: A total sample of 123 family caregivers of patients in palliative care participated in this study. The Prolonged Grief Disorder 13 (PG-13; Prigerson et al., 2009; De Luca et al., 2015) and the Adult Styles Questionnaire (ASQ; Feeney, Alexander, Noller, & Hohaus, 1994; Fossati et al., 2003) were administered. Demographic data were also collected.

Results: The results showed a prevalence of 7% for prolonged grief disorder among participants. Results of the correlational analysis showed that prolonged grief disorder was positively correlated with Confidence and Discomfort with closeness factors. Result of regression analysis pointed out that

Confidence and Discomfort with closeness factors predicted the risk of prolonged grief disorder when holding for demographic data. The final model explained about 25% of the variance.

Conclusion: Our findings suggest that the assessment of the attachment style in family caregivers of patients can contribute to identify subject at high risk of prolonged grief disorder and to implement a psychological support program.

Does depression and mania mediate the relationship between insomnia and psychotic-like experiences? A cross-sectional study in an Italian sample

Maria Filosa¹, Christian Franceschini¹

¹Dipartimento di Medicina e Chirurgia, Università degli Studi di Parma

Abstract

Introduction: Psychotic-like experiences (PLEs) are a non-clinical form of psychosis such as persecutory ideation, bizarre experiences, and perceptual abnormalities that occur in up to 27% of the general population. Accumulating evidence suggests that sleep disturbance may be a clinical variable causally associated with the onset of psychosis and PLEs. In parallel, it has been theorised and empirically demonstrated that affective states and symptoms of mood disturbances may also be implicated in the onset of PLEs. However, whether insomnia may predict PLEs via the mediation of mood disturbance has yet to be fully clarified: this is the aim of our study.

Method: A cross-sectional sample of 1.086 Italians (28.32 ± 9.04) from the non-clinical population has completed an online survey with Insomnia Severity Index and psychotic, depression and mania items from the DSM-5 Self-Rated Level 1 Cross-Cutting Symptom Measure.

Results: It has been showed that both insomnia and mood disturbances were significantly associated with PLEs and a significant indirect effect between insomnia and PLEs mediated by mood disturbance emerged through bootstrap approach.

Conclusions: Our findings showed that mood disturbances partially mediated the relationship between insomnia and PLEs. Up to now, interventions derived from several psychological approaches have been applied to the prevention of psychotic symptoms, and the results of this study suggest the usefulness of the management of insomnia and mood problems in the general population as a potential preventive strategy to limit the onset of more severe psychotic symptoms.

Sexual fantasies and their use in clinical practice: a systematic review

Roberta Galizija¹, Filippo Maria Nimbi¹, Roberta Rossi², Chiara Simonelli¹

¹Department of Dynamic, Clinical and Health Psychology, Sapienza University of Rome, Rome, Italy

²Institute of Clinical Sexology, Rome, Italy

Abstract

Introduction: Research about sexual fantasy has mainly focused on content and frequency of deviant sexual fantasy rather than on the use of sexual fantasy as a therapeutic tool for couples with sexual difficulties. The purpose of this systematic review was to evaluate the existing literature regarding the use of sexual fantasies in clinical practice focusing on their implications for sexual deviations and for couples with sexual difficulties to provide an overview of relevant research. *Method:* A comprehensive search of four electronic databases (Cochrane Library, Google Scholar, Scopus, and EBSCO) was carried out to identify literature regarding the use of sexual fantasies in clinical practice. References lists of articles were reviewed to identify additional papers. A total of 156 papers and relevant books were included in the present review. *Results:* From the results of the current review emerged two main different theoretical traditions informing the use of sexual fantasies in clinical practice: behaviorism and psychoanalysis. Behavioral therapists usually would seem to deal only with conscious fantasy material; the psychoanalysts, instead, with all the topographic levels of fantasy production. Behavioral strategies would appear to be the predominant approach to treating sexual deviations. Furthermore, the results would suggest that sexual fantasies are also used for the treatment of couples with sexual difficulties to improve couple intimacy and sexual functioning. *Conclusions:* This review would suggest the limited presence of research confirming the efficacy of behavioral strategies in the treatment of deviant sexual fantasies. Studies on the use of sexual fantasy in couple interactions also seem scarce. In light of the above, the use of sexual fantasy as a means in clinical practice deserves further studies considering alternative approaches to better understand how to improve treatments for deviant sexual behavior and sexual difficulties in couples.

The influence of caregiving involvement on attentional bias towards infant faces: a pilot study

Micol Gemignani¹, Michele Giannotti¹, Paola Venuti¹, Simona De Falco¹

¹Department of Psychology and Cognitive Science, University of Trento

Abstract

Introduction: A growing body of research has demonstrated that changes related to parenthood may not only be driven by the contribution of nature (i.e., pregnancy), but also shaped by the caregiving

experience. Accordingly, caregiving involvement in childcare has proved to modulate both neurobiological and behavioral pathways in parents. In this preliminary study, we tested the unexplored hypothesis of a link between attentional bias towards infant faces in parents and their involvement in infant care.

Methods: Fourteen parents of children aged from 3 months to 5 years were recruited and tested through a computerized paradigm measuring the ability to disengage attention from unfamiliar infant and adult faces while displaying negative, positive, and neutral facial expressions. A quantitative index of caregiving involvement was measured using a detailed set of items. Parents' attentional bias index was computed for each condition by the difference of mean reaction times and submitted as a dependent variable to a Repeated Measures ANOVA.

Results: Data revealed a main effect of face type ($p < 0.05$) when caregiving involvement was considered as a covariate. Particularly, attentional bias towards infant faces was larger compared to that displayed for adult faces ($p < 0.05$). A positive correlation was found between caregiving involvement and attentional bias index towards infant faces ($p < 0.05$).

Conclusion: Our results may suggest that parents' attention tends to be captured by infant faces. However, this mechanism appears partially explained by caregiving involvement, as the model showed significance only when the role of parents' engagement with their own child was considered. Relevant implications could be outlined on the role of environmental variables (i.e., caregiving involvement) in parents' cognition. Given the preliminary nature of the study and the moderate heterogeneity of the sample size, our results should be interpreted with caution.

Maternal and paternal determinants of prenatal parental attachment: a cross sectional study

*Viola Ghiandoni*¹

¹ Dipartimento di Filosofia, Scienze Sociali, Umane e della Formazione, Università degli Studi di Perugia

Abstract

Background: In recent years the identification of several prenatal parental attachment (PPA) determinants has generated great interest. The bonding process begins in the prenatal period and refers to a multi-facet construct critical in predicting postnatal attachment intensity and infant's health and psychological development after birth. Although increasing evidence suggests specific maternal and paternal determinants towards foetal attachment, studies have primarily focused on maternal attachment leaving the paternal perspective largely unexplored. The present study aims to examine simultaneously different determinants of PPA to the foetus in both mothers and fathers. It was hypothesized that the factors associated with PPA differ among parents.

Method: 273 couples expecting a child (3rd trimester of pregnancy) were recruited for a cross-sectional study from Obstetrics, Gynaecology and Neonatology regional departments. Parents completed questionnaires assessing individual dimensions (ASQ;ERQ), individual psychopathological risk dimensions (IPSM;STAI;EPDS) and relational and contextual dimensions (DAS;MSPSS). Correlations and linear regressions, separately for mothers and fathers, were run to explore the determinants of PPA. *Results:* PPA was found to be associated with psychopathological (STAI-trait) and contextual (MSPSS) dimensions in both parents, with several individual dimensions (IPSM-need for approval; IPSM-fragile inners self; ERQ-suppression; ASQ-confidence) in mothers only. The best model resulted from multiple regressions showed that maternal contextual dimensions predict PPA ($R^2 = .13$; $F_{(9,242)} = 3,94$; $p < .001$). No significant determinants were found in fathers.

Conclusions: PPA determinants largely differ between mothers and fathers. The study also confirmed the critical role of contextual dimensions in predicting PPA in mothers. Clinical implications for PPA specific determinants in both parents as related to infant development are discussed.

Prevalence and forms of psychological abuse in heterosexual and homosexual romantic relationships

*Simon Gbinasssi*¹, *Andrea Smorti*¹, *Franca Tani*²

¹Department of Education, Languages, Intercultures, Literatures and Psychology, University of Florence

²Department of Health Sciences, University of Florence

Abstract

Introduction: Psychological abuse is a widespread and harmful phenomenon (Miller et al., 2019). However, a few studies have taken into account its multidimensional and systematic nature. This study aims to: 1. assess the prevalence, multidimensionality and repetitiveness of perpetrated and suffered psychological abuse in heterosexual, gay and lesbian romantic relationships; 2. analyze the existing differences among these groups.

Method: 1026 participants, aged 18-30 years ($M = 23.93$; $SD = 2.75$), involved in heterosexual (406M, 488W) and homosexual (65M, 67W) romantic relationships, were recruited. *Socio-demographic characteristics*, as gender, sexual orientation, age, relationship length (months) and status (cohabitants or not), birthplace, level of education and socioeconomic status, were collected.

The *Multidimensional Measure of Emotional Abuse* (Bonechi et al., 2011) was used to assess different forms (Restrictive Engulfment, Denigration, Hostile Withdrawal Dominance/Intimidation) of psychological abuse behaviors.

Results: Results showed that the prevalence of severe abuses is less frequent than that reported in literature, with no significant differences among groups. In contrast, significant differences emerged considering the different behavioral forms: heterosexual females act significantly more restrictive engulfment, hostile withdrawal, and dominance/intimidation and suffer of restrictive engulfment and dominance/intimidation. Heterosexual males tend to act in a severe way forms of dominance/intimidation behaviors and not to act behaviors of restrictive engulfment.

Conclusion: This study, by the distinction between occasional and severe psychological abuse, represents a first step in raising awareness of the real prevalence of this phenomenon in the specific Italian context. Moreover, describing the prevalence of different forms of psychological abuse provides important implications for clinicians dealing with couples and victims of abuse.

Does perinatal depression and anxiety treatment improve birth outcomes and child development? A metanalytic approach

*Camilla Gregorini*¹

¹Department of Psychology, University of Milan – Bicocca

Abstract

Antenatal depression and anxiety are associated with adverse birth outcomes and at risk child development in cognitive, behavioral, and psychosocial domains. Different types of psychological interventions to treat perinatal depression and anxiety are thought to have a central role in enhancing the offspring outcome and child development.

With this meta-analysis we aim to investigate the potential effect of non-pharmacological treatments to reduce the maternal depressive and anxious symptoms during pregnancy to prevent the development of negative birth outcomes and psychopathological trajectories on the offspring.

For this meta-analysis we considered randomized controlled trials (RCTs) obtained from PubMed, Scopus, Web of Science, PsycInfo and Cochrane databases that included a non-pharmacological intervention started during pregnancy to treat the maternal distress in the experimental and control groups, a pre- post measure of depression and/or anxiety and neonatal (i.e., birth weight, gestational age, and Apgar scores) or child outcomes (i.e., behavioral, temperament and cognitive aspects).

Based on 14 RCTs, we considered the effect of cognitive behavioral therapy (CBT), psychoeducational and relaxation (music, massage, and yoga) interventions in the experimental group and the control group (9 with “usual treatment”, 2 no treatment and 3 with another type of treatment) and the effect size on the offspring parameters.

Overall, we found a significant decrease of post treatment maternal depression and anxiety after relaxation and psychoeducational treatments (n =636) rather than cognitive behavioral therapy (n=1269) and a small but significant effect on the birth weight, gestational age and the infant temperament. Evidence suggested that specific type of non-pharmacological treatments carried out at the beginning of the pregnancy can significantly reduce the impact of maternal distress even on the offspring and prevent psychopathological consequences.

Psychological variables and pain perception in women affected by endometriosis

Fanny Guglielmucci¹, Maria Domenica Sauta¹, Antonella Granieri¹, Isabella Giulia Franzoi¹

¹ Dipartimento di Psicologia, Università degli Studi di Torino

Abstract

Introduction: Endometriosis negatively affects women's health on a somatopsychic and relational level. Besides, research previously underlined the influence of psychological and emotional factors on pain perception. Thus, the present study aims at investigating the impact of psychological variables (such as affective regulation, defense mechanisms and mentalization) on pain perception and quality of life in women affected by endometriosis compared to a control group.

Methods: The final sample (n = 92) consisted of 58 endometriosis patients (63%) aged between 18 and 54 years (M=36.36; SD=9.17), and 34 (37%) controls aged between 18 and 56 years (M=36.06; SD=10.77). Alexithymia (TAS-20); mentalization (MZQ); defence mechanisms (DSQ-40) and quality of life (SF-12) were assessed.

Results: Compared to the control group, patients reported worse physical health (t=-5.04; p= <0,001) and higher use of defense strategies such as isolation (t=2.45; p=0.02), somatization (t=3.20; p=0.002), devaluation (t=2.72; p=<0,001) and denial (t=2.30; p=0.02). Moreover, patients' physical health correlated negatively with alexithymia (r=-0.29; p<0.05) and difficulty in identifying feelings (r=-0.31; p<0.05). Regarding pain perception, there was a negative correlation between age and mean pain score (r=-0.387; p<0.01) and a positive correlation between dysmenorrhea and mentalization (r=0,407, p<0.01).

Discussions: Results are consistent with previous literature, showing significant levels of alexithymia and use of neurotic and immature defense strategies in endometriosis patients to a greater extent than the control group. Data confirmed that the presence of endometriosis may causes a fracture in the psychophysical balance of women underlining how this condition deeply marks the relationship that individuals establish with their own body.

Is parental sense of competence a mediator in the relationship between parental reflective functioning and children's emotional responses?

*Annalisa Levante*¹, *Chiara Martis*¹, *Serena Petrocchi*^{2,3}, *Flavia Lecciso*^{1,2}

¹ Department of History, Society, and Human Studies, University of Salento, Lecce, Italy

² Lab of Applied Science, Department of History, Society, and Human Studies, University of Salento, Lecce, Italy

³ Faculty of Biomedical Sciences, Università della Svizzera italiana, Lugano, Svizzera

Abstract

The present contribution tested the mediation role of parental sense of competence in the relationship between parental reflective functioning and children's positive emotional responses. The study was cross-sectional. Participants were 72 mother-father-child triads (child aged 3-5 years; $M=4.63$; $sd=.6$). Measures: Parental Reflective Functioning-Questionnaire [Fonagy et al., 2016; certainty of mental states scale (PRF-CM)]; Perceived Sense of Competence [Gibaud-Wallston & Wandersman, 1978; subscales: satisfaction (PSOC-S), efficacy (PSOC-E)]; parents reported children's positive emotional responses.

A full mediation was found considering PRF-CM, PSOC-S ($\beta=.267$; $p=.000$; BootLLCI=.175; BootULCI=.357), and children's emotions ($\beta=.254$; $p=.001$; BootLLCI=.104; BootULCI=.407). The mediation considering PRF-CM, PSOC-E, and children's emotions was not significant. The PRF-CM was significantly related to the children's emotion ($\beta=.143$; $p=.000$; BootLLCI=-.055; BootULCI=.232), but not to the PSOC-E, whereas the latter was related to the to children's emotional responses ($\beta=.226$; $p<.001$; BootLLCI=.118; BootULCI=.337). The gender of the parents was related to PSOC-E ($\beta=.460$; $p<.001$).

The satisfaction scale of the parental sense of competence served as a mediator in the relationship between the certainty of the mental states and children's emotional response. The higher is the recognition of mental states by parents, the higher their satisfaction, and the higher their recognition of children's emotions. Future research should deepen these relationships because they may have implications for interventions on parenting.

The impact of lockdown for COVID-19 outbreak on adults with autism spectrum disorders and their families

Annalisa Levante^{1,2}, *Serena Petrocchi*^{2,3}, *Costanza Colombi*^{4,5}, *Roberto Keller*⁶, *Antonio Narzisi*⁷, *Gabriele Masi*⁷, *Flavia Lecciso*^{1,2}

¹ Department of History, Society, and Human Studies, University of Salento, Lecce, Italy

² Lab of Applied Science, Department of History, Society, and Human Studies, University of Salento, Lecce, Italy

³ Faculty of Biomedical Sciences, Università della Svizzera italiana, Lugano, Svizzera

⁴ Fondazione Stella Maris, Calambrone, Pisa, Italy

⁵ University of Michigan, Ann Arbor MI, USA

⁶ Adult Autism Center, Mental Health Department, Local Health Unit ASL Città di Torino, Turin 10138, Italy

⁷ Department of Child Psychiatry and Psychopharmacology, IRCCS Stella Maris Foundation, 56018 Pisa, Italy

Abstract

This study analyzed the impact of the lockdown dictated by COVID19 outbreak on adults with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD), in term of presence of behavioral problems, and tested whether emotional responses mediated the relationship between parental distress and routines. Participants: 43 families with a son/daughter with ASD [M(sd) = 24.8(6.03)]. Measures: Depression Anxiety Stress Scale (Bottesi et al., 2015; DASS-D); parent-reported questions on sons/daughters's behavioral problems, emotional responses, and routines.

Parents reported more stereotypy [t(42)=-3.855; $p<.000$; M(sd)=3.58(1.9) vs. M(sd)=4.4(2.3)] aggressive behaviors toward himself [t(42)=-2.877; $p=.006$; M(sd)=1.02(1.4) vs. M(sd)=1.65(2.2)], toward others [t(42)=-2.450; $p=.019$; M(sd)=1.16(1.5) vs. M(sd)=1.67(2.3)], and rituals [t(42)=-4.794; $p>.000$; M(sd)=2.7(2) vs. M(sd)=3.67(2.5)] during the lockdown than before.

The DASS-D predicted sons/daughters's positive emotions ($\beta=-.667$; $p=.004$), which was linked to routines ($\beta=.557$; $p=.004$). The DASS-D predicted sons/daughters's negative emotions ($\beta=1.141$; $p>.001$), which was linked to routines ($\beta=-.321$; $p=.033$).

Behavioral problems have increased during the lockdown demonstrating its negative impact on these families. The sons/daughters' emotional responses served as a mediator in the relationship between the parental distress and the sons/daughters' routine. Future research should deepen these relationships in order to improve parent-coaching programs and to include suggestions for parents on how to decrease distress which has an impact on sons/daughters' adaptive behaviors via their emotion regulation.

Gender differences in the cognitive and affective response to gender-based violence scenes of different intensity

Silvia Mammarella¹, Sasha Del Vecchio¹, Anna Salza¹, Massimo Casacchia¹, Rita Roncone¹, Laura Giusti¹

¹ Department of Life, Health and Environmental Sciences, University of L'Aquila, L'Aquila, Italia

Abstract

Introduction: The phenomenon of gender-based violence is still very present, and Italy is one of the less equalitarian European countries (World Economic Forum, 2020). Gender-based violence seems to be present also in young people (Kaufman et al., 2019; Rollero & De Piccoli, 2020). Scientific evidence identified some risk factors including low levels of empathy, dysfunctional coping styles, difficulty in managing conflicts, low self-esteem, having been a victim or having witnessed acts of violence in the family environment, and low socioeconomic status (O'Keefe, 2005; Narvey et al., 2021; Bao et al., 2016; Ossorno García et al., 2019). The present study aimed to identify emotional and cognitive profiles and empathic abilities in a sample of young people undergoing a perspective-taking task. *Methods:* The following tests were administered online: 1) an experimental Task consisting of five vignettes representing situations of violence toward women, with increasing severity, in terms of harmfulness and intrusiveness. Women were asked to try to put themselves in the victim's shoes, by identifying the victim's thoughts and emotions; men, in addition, were required to put themselves in the shoes of the boy who was the perpetrator of violence; 2) Interpersonal Reactivity Index (IRI), a 28-item self-report test that allows evaluating the subject's empathic ability. *Results:* Women were more empathetic than men ($F = 21,954$; $p = 0,000$), confirming previous literature data. Gender differences in thinking styles ($\chi^2 = 13.710$; $p = 0.003$) and emotional responses ($\chi^2 = 26.215$; $p = 0.003$) emerged only in the scenes with a lower harmfulness and intrusiveness. No gender differences were found when the vignettes showed scenes of more severe, and “open” violence. *Conclusions:* It is important to monitor this phenomenon with adequate tools also in young people, to increase awareness of violence even in less impactful situations, which could represent a precursor of more severe forms of violence.

Online self management training with students: promoting well-being at university

*Maria Luisa Martino*¹, *Raffaella Passeggia*², *Maria Rosaria Di Natale*¹

¹Sinapsi Centre Services for Active and Participated Inclusion of Students, Federico II University Naples

²Department of Humanities, Federico II University, Naples

Abstract

The concept of self-management (SM) was developed in the chronic illness and in the organizational fields. Only recently SM has been used in the academic context. SM refers to the ability to work effectively towards meaningful goals and to be flexible in the face of setbacks. It reflects planning and goal-seeking behavior, resilience behavior and the process of working flexibly towards meaningful personal results. Therefore, SM is an umbrella concept that encompasses the pursuit of transversal key skills useful in the academic path and in the future job context. At the Sinapsi Centre Services for Active and

Participated Inclusion of Students of Federico II University Naples an online SM group training was developed for students of each degree and year courses, held on MTeams. The training is composed by six weekly meetings focused on the discussion of four key competences: effectively time management, motivation in one's training and professional project, strategies for achieving aims and problem solving. In each meeting, a mediation device aimed at supporting the pursuit of each specific competence was delivered to the group. The training began in October 2020 reaching a total of 5 cycles. To assess the efficacy of the training, Academic Performance Inventory, Academic Motivation Scale, General Self-Efficacy and SInAPSi Academic Engagement Scale were administered in pre and post-test phases. T-test for paired samples was performed for all the scales to compare pre and post-test scores. Findings on the preliminary efficacy of the first two training groups showed a statistically significant improvement in general self-efficacy, an improvement in academic performance and positive and consistent style of motivation and academic engagement. The results suggest that the online SM training effectively impacted on the perception of self-efficacy of the participants and, consequently, on the academic achievement.

Gender differences in career choice in a sample of Italian adolescents

Rita Massaro¹, Carla Nasti¹, Alessandro Lo Presti¹, Roberto Marcone¹, Ida Sergi¹, Gaetana Affuso¹, Lucia Ariemma¹, Gennaro Cordasco¹, Anna Esposito¹, Maria Bianco², Alessandro Mercogliano², Massimo De Pasquale², Mariateresa Pavone², Vincenzo Paolo Senese¹

¹Dipartimento di Psicologia, Università della Campania "Luigi Vanvitelli"

²Liceo Scientifico Statale "Giordano Bruno", Arzano (Napoli)

Abstract

Career choice is a very important decision in individuals' lives as it can affect the well-being of individuals and society. Based on these considerations, a research-intervention project, involving five European countries (Portugal [coordinator], Bulgaria, Spain, Greece and Italy), and aimed at implementing a tailored guidance methodology (G-Guidance), was presented and approved by the European community. In the preliminary phase of the project, the aim was to describe which preferences and factors determine career choices in European adolescent and investigate gender differences that have been previously described in the literature. To this aim, a sample of 430 students (13-20 years; 66.7% females) from one of the schools involved in the project was recruited and was administered a questionnaire that investigated: plans after school, perceived control of the career choice, sources information considered, self-reported skills, the working area of interest and the perceived importance of guidance information. Data showed that most students (>86%) declared that they will continue studying after school and choose by

themselves the career. The more frequently consulted information sources were the internet, professionals and family, and that the more frequently self-reported skills were autonomy and team working ability. Moreover, data showed gender differences in self-reported skills, the working area of interest and perceived importance of guidance information. Males reported to have more self-esteem than females, but the opposite pattern was observed for initiative, precision and attention to details. Males are more oriented to work in the scientific field, whereas females are more oriented to the social field. Finally, females evaluated guidance information as more important than males. Results confirmed the relevance of sex differences in career choices and supported the importance and need of tailored career guidance activities to promote a better adjustment.

Evaluation of the outcomes of a remote psychological intervention in patients who are candidates for bariatric surgery through CORE-OM. A pilot study

Maria Rosaria Magurano¹, Emanuela Rellini¹, Geltrude Mingrone², Marco Raffaelli³, Daniela Pia Rosaria Chieffo¹

¹ U.O.S Psicologia Clinica, Fondazione Policlinico Universitario “A. Gemelli” IRCCS, Roma

² U.O.C. Patologie dell’Obesità, Fondazione Policlinico Universitario “A. Gemelli” IRCCS, Università Cattolica del Sacro Cuore, Roma

³ U.O.C. Chirurgia Endocrina e Metabolica, Fondazione Policlinico Universitario “A. Gemelli” IRCCS, Università Cattolica del Sacro Cuore, Roma

Abstract

Bariatric surgery requires a psychological evaluation, through a clinical interview and specific psychodiagnostic tests, in order to identify relative contraindications (minor psychopathologies and negative predictive indices) or absolute. In case of relative contraindications, it is expected a pre-operative psychological path. Following the lockdown, it was proposed to patients who needed the path to continue the sessions through a special online platform. In the last few years the scientific community has questioned a lot about online psychotherapy and in particular about the benefits and limits of this clinical practice (Algeri et al., 2018); many studies have highlighted the effectiveness of remote treatment (Marks et al, 2007; Norwood et al., 2018). The purpose of this work was to evaluate the outcomes of remote psychological intervention in patients who are candidates for bariatric surgery. The study was of observational retrospective and partly prospective nature. The sample: 25 subjects, average age 43 years old, 6 males and 19 females. The CORE-OM (Evaluation-Outcome Measure, Palmieri and Reitano, 2014) was administered in the evaluation phase and repeated after 8 sessions of psychotherapy. The CORE-OM is a self-report questionnaire developed to measure the change in mental health of adults, particularly

in assessing the change following a psychological treatment. It allows routine detection of the effects of treatments to be included in clinical practice. A follow-up will be carried out one year after the intervention. The results showed that these patients had an improvement in the Construct Problems ($p = 0.01$), Functioning ($p = 0.04$) and Risk ($p = 0.04$). Hence these patients show less psychological distress, improvement in personal and social relationships, and fewer self-harming and heterolesive behaviors. The change in setting does not seem to have affected the outcome of the psychological intervention, allowing patients to become suitable for surgery.

Intergenerational risk for depression: the relationship between rumination and response inhibition in an emotional Go/NoGo task

*Tania Moretta*¹, *Simone Messerotti Benvenuti*^{1,2}

¹Dipartimento di Psicologia Generale, Università degli Studi di Padova;

²Padova Neuroscience Center (PNC), Università degli Studi di Padova

Abstract

Introduction: A deficit in motivated attention to pleasant stimuli is considered as a putative risk factor for depression. Moreover, ruminative thinking and poor inhibitory control have been described as cognitive vulnerabilities to depression. However, no study so far has investigated the interplay between motivated attention and rumination on inhibitory control in an emotional context in individuals with high familial risk for depression (i.e., unaffected offspring with at least one parent having a history of depression). *Method:* Rumination and familial risk for depression were evaluated with the Ruminative Response Scale and the Family History Screen, respectively. Individuals at high ($n = 20$) and low familial risk ($n = 25$) completed an online version of the emotional Go/NoGo task, including the presentation of unpleasant, pleasant, and neutral pictures selected from the International Affective Picture System. *Results:* As compared with controls, individuals at high familial risk showed more ruminative thinking. Moreover, in controls, accuracy rates and efficiency (faster reaction times to Go trials and greater accuracy to NoGo trials) to pleasant and unpleasant stimuli were lower than those to neutral stimuli, and then those observed in individuals at high familial risk. Differently, in individuals at high risk, accuracy rates and efficiency to pleasant and unpleasant stimuli were comparable to those observed in response to neutral ones. Of note, only in controls ruminative thinking moderated accuracy rates and efficiency in pleasant and unpleasant trials: specifically, the greater the ruminative thinking, the greater the emotional interference on response inhibition. *Conclusions:* These findings suggest that unlike healthy controls, individuals at high familial risk are characterized by a pattern of high rumination and weakened attention to motivationally salient stimuli.

COVID-19 and psychology: a dynamic and imaginative analysis of an “unpredictable” (?) pandemic

*Luciano Peirone*¹

¹ Former Adjunct Professor: University of Chieti-Pescara and University of Brescia; Psychotherapist, Turin.

Abstract

Introduction: CoViD-19 has destroyed the safety feeling. The objective of this study is the perception-evaluation of this new (?) problem. New or old?

Method: Spontaneous or stimulated reactions to the pandemic were caught by a qualitative and informal “interviews” realized in a clinical context using the telehealth support. The psychotherapist asked some indirect questions about CoViD-19, particularly on the “ex ante” awareness.

Results: The World knows three similar pandemics in the last 100 years: the Spanish flu (1918-1920), the Asian flu (1957-1960) and CoViD-19 (2019-). All the subjects engaged in the survey were surprised, unprepared, and psychologically frail. The survey underlines a lack of historical memory (“I don’t know”), as well as a lack of mental imagery (“I can’t imagine, I can’t visualize”). The subjects were aware of at least five “mass and popular visionary messages”, globally available in the period 2001-2015 (i.e. before CoViD-19!). Despite this knowledge, they were completely unaware about the two previous pandemics. Moreover, never before CoViD-19 they had the ability and courage to think and predict possible pandemics.

Theoretical and practical conclusions: “Cognitive error + emotional error (the real basis of the psychological problem) = imaginative error”. So, there is the incapacity to think/imagine the disturbing idea of a pandemic and to foresee/predict the problem. Not only ignorance but also probable mechanisms of defence... The outcomes of this survey suggest the indispensable implementation of “good practices of imagination (and information)”: 1) knowing and understanding the past pandemics; 2) predicting the possible worldwide infections; 3) planning a necessary practical prevention; 4) building an effective coping.

Attachment style and emotion regulation: the modulatory role of A118G polymorphism

*Chiara Pesca*¹, *Valeria Carola*²

¹ Department of Dynamic and Clinical Psychology and Health Studies, "La Sapienza" University, Rome

² IRCCS Santa Lucia Foundation, Rome

Abstract

Introduction: Emotion regulation (ER) refers to the process by which one can regulate his/her own and other's emotions, and is pivotal for social functioning and emotional well-being. ER received attention within the context of attachment styles, which have been proven to shape emotional development in children. The attachment system finds its target in the μ -opioid receptors (MOR), in particular in the A118G polymorphism that affects MOR availability and was found to be associated with social pain, affective bond and attachment. Given the above, we hypothesized that A118G polymorphism can modulate the impact of attachment styles on ER.

Methods: to evaluate attachment styles and ER we respectively employed the Relationship Questionnaire and the Difficulties in Emotion Regulation Scale. Genotype analyses for A118G polymorphism were performed on DNA samples obtained by saliva specimens from volunteer university students.

Results: A118G polymorphism effectively modulates the effect of attachment styles on ER. In particular, G allele carriers with attachment insecurity exhibit the overall higher scores in the subscales Goals and global difficulties in ER with respect to A-insecure/secure carriers.

Conclusions: this pilot study offers new insight on the factors that can shape emotional development, shedding light on the putative role of the opioid system in modulating the developmental trajectories of ER in relation to their attachment styles.

Dispositional resilience as a moderator in the main effect of emotional intelligence on burnout and life satisfaction in home care workers

*Maria Cristina Petralia*¹, *Giuseppe Alessio Platania*², *Vittorio Edoardo Scuderi*², *Vittorio Lenzo*³

¹ Department of Clinical and Experimental Medicine, University of Messina

² Department of Education Sciences, University of Catania

³ Department of Social and Educational Sciences of the Mediterranean Area, University for Foreigners "Dante Alighieri" of Reggio Calabria, Reggio Calabria, Italy

Abstract

Aim: The aim of our study is to identify the influence of psychological factors such as Emotional Intelligence (EI) and Dispositional Resilience (DR) on Burnout and life satisfaction of the operators of a company providing integrated home care in Sicily. The study focused on the analysis of the role of DR as moderator in the main effect of EI on Burnout subdimensions and life satisfaction specifically on the moderate effect of EI on disillusionment and relationship detriment.

Materials & methods: An online multi-section questionnaire was used. The sample is composed of 162 Italian health workers (95 males, 58.6%; 67 females, 41.4%) aged 18 to 65 years. The participants (nurses, physiotherapists, psychologists, logopedists, doctors etc.), were selected on a voluntary basis.

Tools: Trait Emotional Intelligence Questionnaire - SF (TEIQue-SF; Cooper & Petrides, 2010; Di Fabio, 2013), Dispositional Resilience (DRS-15 by Picardi, Bartone, Querci et al. 2012); Satisfaction with Life Scale (SWLS; Diener et al., 1985) and the Link burnout Questionnaire.

Results: The results show that the EI significantly predicted disillusion for low ($\beta = -.48$, $p < .001$, 95% CI: $-.65$, $-.31$) and moderate levels ($\beta = -.28$, $p < .001$, 95% CI: $-.42$, $-.13$) of DR while it didn't predict disillusion for high level of resilience ($\beta = -.07$, $p = .446$, 95% CI: $-.27$, $.12$). Detriment of the Relationship was significantly predicted by EI for low ($\beta = -.65$, $p < .001$, 95% CI: $-.83$, $-.47$), moderate ($\beta = -.53$, $p < .001$, 95% CI: $-.68$, $-.37$) and high ($\beta = -.40$, $p < .001$, 95% CI: $-.65$, $-.31$) levels of DR.

Discussion: The DR, in our sample, appears to moderate the effect of EI on some aspects of Burnout such as disillusionment and damage to the relationship. It can be considered that the significant effect of moderation can have beneficial consequences in the work of home caregivers, reducing the risk of losing the passion for one's job, making it a meaningless routine and deteriorating the relationship with patients.

Emotional skills in kidney transplantation: a possible predictor of therapeutic adherence and fears related to COVID-19? A single center

*Maria Luisa Pistorio*¹, *Concetta De Pasquale*², *Massimiliano Veroux*³, *Alessia Giaquinta*¹, *Pierfrancesco Veroux*¹

¹ Vascular Surgery and Organ Transplant Unit, Department of General Surgery and Medical-Surgical Specialties, University Hospital of Catania

¹ Vascular Surgery and Organ Transplant Unit, Department of Educational Sciences, University of Catania

³ Organ Transplant Unit, Department of Surgical, Medical Sciences and Advanced Technologies, University hospital of Catania

Abstract

Kidney transplantation, if on the one hand improves the quality of life of those who undergo surgery it can, on the other hand, be accompanied by new problems, including poor therapeutic adherence. Fears related to COVID-19 can further complicate the emotional-affective structure of organ transplant recipients. Emotional intelligence, as the ability to understand and consciously manage emotions, has not yet been studied in organ transplant recipients.

This study aims to evaluate emotional intelligence in a sample of kidney transplant recipients and evaluate the possible predictive value on therapeutic adherence and fears related to COVID-19.

Ninety kidney transplant recipients (mean age 49.95 years) were given the following tools: Multidimensional Assessment of COVID-19-Related Fears Scale (MAC-RF) to investigate COVID-19 fears, Emotional Intelligence Scale (EIS) to assess emotional intelligence, and Basel Assessment of Adherence to Immunosuppressive Medications Scale (BAASIS) to evaluate therapeutic adherence.

Significant correlations were found between EIS score and age, years after transplantation and difficulty in cognitive monitoring of concerns ($r=0.617$, $r=0.549$, $r=0.968$; $p<0.05$). Fears related to meaningful relationships also correlated positively with BAASIS ($r=0.614$; $p<0.05$) and its Timing and Taking dimensions ($r=0.850$, $r=0.762$; $p<0.05$). Furthermore, emotional intelligence seems to predict therapeutic adherence and fears related to COVID-19 ($B=3.17$, $B=2.89$, $p<0.001$).

In our study, emotional intelligence was significantly associated with better therapeutic adherence and less fear related to COVID-19. Knowing and improving emotional intelligence levels of organ transplant recipients is essential both for adequate therapeutic adherence and to better manage and cope with the effects of a possible traumatic event.

The role of bipolar disorder, negative affectivity, and mentalization in adolescent gambling

Barbara Pizzini¹, Giovanna Nigro¹, Marina Cosenza¹

¹ Dipartimento di Psicologia, Università degli Studi della Campania – Luigi Vanvitelli

Abstract

While there is some evidence for the association between gambling disorder (GD) and bipolar disorder (BD) among adults, and despite some studies have found that BD frequently co-occurs with a wide range of risky behaviors in adolescence, no study has yet investigated the role of BP in adolescent gambling. Recent studies in clinical samples highlight that people suffering from bipolar disorder show, among others, deficit in mentalization. Furthermore, studies in clinical and non-clinical samples demonstrated that problematic gambling is often associated with negative emotional states, such as depression, anxiety and stress. Finally, in previous studies poor mentalization has found to predict adolescent problem gambling.

The present study investigated the interplay among BD symptoms, mentalization, negative affectivity, and gambling severity in a large sample of Italian adolescents. Three hundred one adolescents, aged between 14 and 19 years, completed the South Oaks Gambling Screen-Revised for Adolescents (SOGS-RA), the Mood Disorder Questionnaire (MDQ), the Reflective Functioning Questionnaire (RFQ-8), and the Depression Anxiety Stress Scale (DASS-21).

Hierarchical linear regression analysis showed that male gender, uncertainty about mental states (hypomentalization), high levels of stress, and symptoms of BD predicted gambling severity ($R^2_{adj} = .337$;

$F_{5,295} = 31.529; p < .001$). Mediation analysis revealed that high MDQ scores affect gambling severity not only directly, but also indirectly via both hypomentalization and stress.

In conclusion, BD symptoms contribute to gambling severity, and both deficit in mentalization and stress enhance the effect of BP symptoms on gambling involvement. Although this novel finding calls for further exploration, in our opinion, future prevention programs and clinical intervention should take into account the interplay between symptoms of bipolar disorder and gambling disorder.

The role of the emotional awareness in primary school: examining the impact of group intervention in scholastic context

*Marco Andrea Piombo*¹, *Pietro Alfano*², *Umberto Maria Cianciolo*³, *Federica Andrei*¹, *Maria Stella Epifanio*³, *Giacomo Mancini*⁴, *Elena Trombini*¹, *Sabina La Grutta*³

¹Dipartimento di Psicologia “Renzo Canestrari”, Università di Bologna

²Consiglio Nazionale Delle Ricerca (CNR), Istituto per la Ricerca e l’Innovazione Biomedica (IRIB), Palermo

³Dipartimento di Scienze Psicologiche, Pedagogiche, dell’Esercizio Fisico e della Formazione, Università Degli Studi di Palermo

⁴Dipartimento di Scienze Dell’Educazione “Giovanni Maria Bertin”, Università di Bologna

Abstract

Emotional awareness is a key component of children’s psychological, cognitive and social development in primary school, and it is a central element of learning. The emotional development aimed to achieve an emotional maturity can help children to manage the needs of their social and educational environments, to keep good relationships with peers, and express emotions in adaptive manners having a positive effect on scholastic integration and academic performance. The primary goal of this study was to evaluate the effectiveness of implementing a psychoeducational group intervention aimed to improve emotional health, quality of integration and children’s scholastic skills. This study is designed as a 4-year longitudinal study. A total of 200 children (94 Males; M Age = 7.22 years; SD = 0.97 years) from 8 different classes, completed the Pictures of Facial Affect (Ekman, 1972), the Drawn Stories Technique (Trombini, 1994), the Classroom Drawing (Quaglia, Saglione, 1990), Colored Progressive Matrices (Raven, J. C. 1983). Group intervention based on different psychoeducational activities per year was provided to 4 classes and tests were administered at baseline and at retest both to the experimental groups and to the control groups every year. The mixed-model ANOVA revealed a significant main effect for POFA score over time ($F = 6.24, p = .01$) and between POFA and group ($F = 4.82, p = .03$) but no significant main effect has been found for classroom drawing over time ($F = .81, p > .05$) and between

quality of integration and group intervention. These results suggest that intervention was successful to improve children emotional recognition but it has no a significant effect on scholastic integration probably for the complexity of scholastic environment. These findings support the importance of a psychoeducational program in school in promoting of emotional health but the relation of cognitive skills, emotional awareness and quality of integration require more observations.

An overview of the gambling behaviors of Italian adolescents

*Lucia Ponti*¹, *Simon Ghinassi*¹, *Franca Tani*²

¹Department of Education, Languages, Intercultures, Literatures and Psychology, University of Florence

²Department of Health Sciences, University of Florence

Abstract

Introduction: Gambling constitutes a form of addictive behavior that is more and more spreading among adolescents in the world (Andrie et al., 2019). However, little is known about adolescents' gambling behaviors in Italy. The present study aimed to: 1) explore the prevalence of gambling, the frequency of different gambling behaviors, the games most played, the amount of money spent and 2) analyze the more frequent problem gambling behaviors, considering the type of gambler (regular/non-regular) and gender.

Method: 1255 adolescents (59.1% males), aged 13-19 years ($M = 16.06$; $SD = 1.47$), were recruited for the study. The Italian version of *South Oaks Gambling Screen-Revised for Adolescents* (SOGS-RA; Chiesi et al., 2013) was used to assess gambling behavior. A series of chi-squared tests were performed to explore differences between groups.

Results: Results showed that 70.8% of adolescents had gambled at least once in the previous year. Among them, 24% were regular gamblers who spent more money, had more gambling-related problems, and chose games more at risk for developing gambling addiction, compared to non-regular gamblers. Regarding gender, males gambled more, more frequently, spent more, and presented more gambling-related problems than females. However, gender differences emerged only in the non-regular group in which females, although less involved in gambling activities, once they start, they present the same risk profile as males. In contrast, in the regular-gambling group not differences emerge by gender on any analyzed aspect.

Conclusion: Results provide a detailed overview of gambling preferences, characteristics and risk profile of Italian adolescents which can have important social and clinical implications. In fact, data offer relevant information for clinicians who work with adolescent gamblers, to create tailored prevention and intervention programs.

Attachment styles and Instagram problematic use: the mediation role of FoMO and usage motives

Virginia Pupi¹, Roberta Biolcati¹

¹Dipartimento di Scienze dell'Educazione "Giovanni Maria Bertin", Università di Bologna

Abstract

In recent years, Instagram has become hugely popular also between emerging adults, but little is still known about the problematic Instagram use (PIU) affecting some members.

According to the Uses and Gratifications approach, audience members show different usage motives in selecting and using the social platform that meets their individual needs. In this regard, attachment style is associated with distinct motives and behaviors, that in some cases could lead to SNSs problematic use (e.g. Facebook). Moreover, previous studies suggested that high engagement in Instagram is partially due to the "Fear of Missing Out" (FoMO), a pervasive apprehension that others might be having rewarding experiences from which one is absent. Consequently, the objectives of the present study were to examine the relationships between attachment styles, Instagram problematic use, motives for using Instagram and Fear of Missing Out, as well as exploring the mediating role of FoMO and usage motives between attachment styles and PIU.

A total of 299 Instagram users attending university ($n= 228$, 76.3 % females), aged between 19 and 39 years ($Mage = 25.44$ years, $SD = 3.99$) completed an online questionnaire comprising the Instagram Addiction Scale (IAS), the Attachment Style Questionnaire (ASQ), the Motivations for using Instagram and the FoMO scale.

Findings highlighted that 68 (20.5%) participants showed a mild or moderate form of PIU. A mediation analysis pointed out that Need for Approval and Preoccupation with Relationships styles, both core aspects of anxious attachment, were related to PIU when mediated by FoMO, Self-Expression and Escapism motives. Relationships as Secondary style, referred to the avoidance attachment, was directly associated to PIU.

These results offer empirical evidences to the Uses and Gratifications theory suggesting that specific usage motives, FoMO and attachment disorganisation play a relevant role in developing social network problematic use.

Cyberbullying and parental mediation: a narrative literature review

Valeria Rega¹, Francesca Gioia¹

¹Department of Humanities, University of Naples Federico II

Abstract

Cyberbullying represents one of the most widespread Internet-based risks among children and adolescents, therefore scientific research largely focused on protective factors in order to prevent this phenomenon. In this regard, parental mediation (PM) of technology use has been increasingly explored as a potential cyberbullying protective factor. This study narratively reviewed the literature of the last ten years (from 2011 to 2021) focused on the relationship between cyberbullying and PM, considering the main variables involved in this relationship and highlighting possible age and gender-based differences. Following the established inclusion criteria, 18 papers were selected, including samples aged between 8 and 18 years. The reviewed studies showed mixed findings of the role of restrictive and co-viewing PM strategies in preventing cyberbullying. However, active PM played an important role in decreasing the risk of adolescents' involvement in cyberbullying. Furthermore, the relationship between PM styles, cyberbullying, parenting styles, psychopathological symptoms, age, and gender has been significantly explored among these studies. In conclusion, this review showed that PM represents a significant protective factor against cyberbullying and related psychopathological symptoms, such as anxiety and depression, especially among children rather than adolescents. Consistency between parenting style and cyber-specific PM style significantly decreases the risk of cyberbullying, while an inconsistent PM style exacerbates this risk. Interestingly, female adolescents appeared exposed to higher levels of PM, while lower active and restrictive mediation negatively affect cyberbullying especially for male adolescents rather than females. These findings have important practical implications for implementing preventive interventions for cyberbullying in both educational and clinical settings.

Anxiety and depression in patients with chronic and degenerative eye diseases: an exploratory survey

Emanuela Rellini^{1,2}, Simona Turco^{1,3}, Filippo Maria Amore^{1,3}, Stefania Fortini^{1,2}

¹ Polo Nazionale di Servizi e Ricerca per la Prevenzione della Cecità e la Riabilitazione Visiva- IAPB Italia Onlus

² U.O.S Psicologia Clinica, Fondazione Policlinico Universitario "A. Gemelli" IRCCS,

³ U.O.C. Oculistica, Fondazione Policlinico Universitario "Agostino Gemelli" IRCCS, Roma

Abstract

The transition from the biomedical to the bio-psycho-social model has led to an increased focus on mental health and quality of life in disease management. Many clinical studies report the comorbidity of depressive and/or anxiety disorders in chronic diseases (Bum and Choi, 2015). Chronic and degenerative eye diseases can also promote the onset of depression and anxiety (Demmin et al., 2020, Rellini et

al.,2021), which, if undetected and untreated, can hinder patient adherence to the treatment and affect the psychological well-being. Under WHO mandate, we initiated a multicenter study to investigate how well the ophthalmologists take into account the mood disorders in the care of their chronic patients. The purpose is twofold, on the one hand to prevent the chronicization of mental pathology, addressing, in case of need, the patient to the clinical psychologist and/or psychiatrist, and on the other hand the worsening of the ocular pathology, favoring adherence to treatment. The sample consists of 150 patients, 80 males and 70 females with an average age of 65 years. To assess depression and anxiety were used the Patient Health Questionnaire (PHQ-9) and the Generalized Anxiety Disorder (GAD-7) The questionnaires were complete by the patient while waiting for the follow-up visit. 69% of patients scored ≥ 5 on PHQ9 (indicative of a possible depressive condition requiring specialist evaluation), but only 27% of them were referred to the clinical psychologist. 36% of patients scored ≥ 10 on GAD7 (indicative of a possible anxiety condition requiring specialist evaluation), and 52% of them were referred to psychologist. Our preliminary results show a significant presence of anxiety and depression symptoms in patients with chronic eye diseases (confirming literature data) and emphasize the urgency of encouraging awareness interventions aimed at the ophthalmologists, so that psychological aspects are taken into account in the care of patients with chronic eye diseases.

Attachment style in adolescent gambling: the mediating role of mentalization

Mariagiulia Sacco¹, Marina Cosenza¹, Giovanna Nigro¹, Maria Ciccarelli¹, Barbara Pizzini¹

¹Dipartimento di Psicologia, Università degli Studi della Campania - Luigi Vanvitelli

Abstract

Although several studies highlighted the influence of attachment on problem gambling behavior, little effort was made to investigate the role of attachment styles dimensions on gambling behavior. To our best knowledge, no study analyzed the relationships among attachment styles, mentalization, and gambling severity in adolescence. This study aimed to investigate the interplay between attachment style, mentalization, and gambling in a large sample of adolescents, as well as to explore the causal pattern among variables contributing to gambling severity.

A total of 482 high school students ($M = 54,1\%$), aged between 16 and 20 years, were administered the South Oaks Gambling Screen Revised for Adolescents (SOGS-RA), the Attachment Style Questionnaire (ASQ), and the Reflective Functioning Questionnaire (RFQ-8).

To evaluate the relative contributions of gender, attachment style, and mentalizing to adolescent gambling severity, data were submitted to a hierarchical linear regression analysis with the SOGS-RA total score as the dependent variable.

Results showed that, along with male gender, significant predictors of gambling severity were the ASQ dimension “Preoccupation with Relationships” and Uncertainty about mental states as measured by the RFQ-8 ($R^2_{adj} = .325$; $F_{4,477} = 58.922$, $p < .001$). Finally, considering linear regression analysis results, a mediation analysis was performed with SOGS-RA scores as the criterion variable and gender as covariate. The model we tested assumed that the effect of Preoccupation with Relationships on gambling severity was mediated by Uncertainty about mental states. The results of mediation analysis provided support for the hypothesized model.

Our findings showed, for the first time, that the inability to perceive and interpret human behavior in terms of intentional mental states, and to take them into account plays a key role in the relation between an anxious and dependent approach to relationships and adolescents’ gambling involvement.

Increased self-reported eating disorders during the COVID-19 pandemic: the role of fear of COVID-19 and maladaptive facebook use

Laura Salerno¹, Rubinia Celeste Bonfanti¹, Lucia Fortunato¹

¹ Department of Psychology, Educational Science and Human Movement, University of Palermo, Palermo, Italy

Abstract

Introduction: During the first stage of the COVID-19 pandemic, when vaccines were not yet available, a large number of preventive behaviors, characterized by social distancing (e.g., quarantine, lockdown), were implemented to contain the infection. Initial empirical evidences showed that lockdown measures have had adverse consequences for people with eating disorders (ED), with increases in maladaptive eating habits. Moreover, the social isolation due to the COVID-19-related lockdown has had an impact on social media consumption around the world. This study examines the relationship between fear of COVID-19, maladaptive Facebook use and disordered eating. **Methods:** 115 Italian subjects (91.3% females; mean age = 28.60 ± 7.31) with self-reported dysfunctional eating behaviors completed online questionnaires on fear of COVID-19, maladaptive Facebook use and dysfunctional eating cognitions. Structural Equation Modeling was used to analyze a longitudinal dataset with two waves of data collection (T0: Italian first lockdown; T1: after two months). **Results:** Results provided evidence that participants showed higher levels of disordered eating cognitions at T1 (i.e., eating concerns, shape concerns and weight concerns). Moreover, at T0, higher fear of COVID-19 was associated to higher daily time spent on Facebook, which in turn predicted higher disordered eating cognitions (i.e., shape concerns and weight concerns) at T1. Finally, maladaptive Facebook use mediated the relationship between daily time on Facebook and Shape concerns. **Conclusion:** The findings of this study suggest that during the pandemic

people with dysfunctional eating behaviors were at risk for deterioration of ED symptoms. Moreover, this is the first study that investigated the impact of dysfunctional Facebook use in increasing disordered eating cognitions during the pandemic, suggesting that it may be useful to addressing negative consequences of using social networks by individuals suffering from ED.

Sex and age differences in smartphone use and dissociative experience

Federica Sciacca¹, Concetta De Pasquale¹, Carmela Dinaro^{1,3}, Zira Hichy¹

¹Department of Educational Sciences, University of Catania, Catania, Italy

²Drug Addiction Health Service, SER.T – ASP3 in Catania, Via Fabio, 1, Acireale (CT), Italy

Abstract

Literature on the topic has shown that adolescents, and young adults, particularly males, are at a higher risk for addictive behavior related to smartphones and its psychological consequences. The aim of this study is to assess sex and age differences in smartphone use and dissociative experiences.

Three groups of Italian participants: 200 teenagers (group 1; 116 male, Mage 16.12±1.55), 200 university students (group 2; 78 male, Mage 21.60±1.43), and 306 adults (group 3; 131 male, Mage 45.02±12.33), have been studied with differentiated protocols: the Smartphone Addiction Scale for Adolescents and Young Adults – Short Version (SAS-SV), the dissociative experience scale for adolescents and young adults (A-DES); the Smartphone Addiction Scale (SAS) and the Dissociative Experiences Scale (DES-II) for adults.

According to the normative data of SAS-SV (M/F: addicted for scores >31/>33, high-risk of addiction for 23-30/23-32 score range) and SAS (abuse for score >115, addicted for score >125), in group 1 males were found to be addicted to SAS-SV (score of 51.80). In group 2, both females (score of 29.21) and males (score of 27.03) showed high-risk of addiction. In group 3, females conformed to the DSM-V addiction diagnosis (score of 131.58). These differences by gender were confirmed by the t-test. According to the ANOVA, age differences have been found only for dissociative experiences. Pearson's correlation showed that smartphone use is positively correlated with absorption in group 1, with amnesia and depersonalization in group 2 and 3. Regression analysis showed that smartphone use is predictor of: absorption in group 1; amnesia, and depersonalization in group 2 and 3 (p<.001).

Smartphone addiction differs both on gender and age. With increasing age, dissociative experiences changes. Smartphone use is predictor of absorption in teenagers, of amnesia and depersonalization in university students and adults.

Psychological and relational risk factors for perinatal depression: some preliminary results

Melania Severo ^{1,2}, Elisa Giannaccari ^{3,4}, Alessia Marconcini ⁵, Anna Maria Tufariello ^{1,2}, Annamaria Petito ¹, Giuseppe Luigi Palma ³, Antonio Ventriglio ¹, Luigi Nappi ², Giuseppe Maruotti ², Antonio Perrone ⁴, Mario Vicino ⁵, Lucio Paletta ⁵, Antonello Bellomo ¹

¹ Psychology and Psychiatry Unit, Department of Clinical and Experimental Medicine, University of Foggia, Foggia, Italy

² Department of Medical and Surgical Sciences, Institute of Obstetrics and Gynecology, University of Foggia, Foggia, Italy

³ Hospital Psychology Unit, U.O. "Vito Fazzi" Hospital, Piazza Filippo Muratore, Lecce, Italy

⁴ Obstetrics and Gynecology Unit, U.O.C. "Vito Fazzi" Hospital, Piazza Filippo Muratore, Lecce, Italy

⁵ Obstetrics and Gynecology Unit, U.O.C. "Di Venere" Hospital, Via Ospedale Di Venere 1, Bari, Italy

Abstract

Pregnancy is related with psychological and relational changes, even after childbirth. Perinatal depression affects 10-15% of women. Insecure attachment style seems to affect the vulnerability to postpartum depression and the severity of symptoms. This study investigates the prevalence of perinatal depression and maternal attachment style in order to identify strategies to promote the transition to motherhood. We present findings from the first phase of a longitudinal study involving women from the third trimester of pregnancy up to one year after delivery.

A sample of 1664 Italian women were screened during their third trimester of pregnancy. The Edinburgh Postnatal Depression Scale (EPDS) was used to explore depressive symptoms, World Health Quality Of Life Questionnaire (WHOQOL) was used to explore quality of life, and the Experience in Close Relationship (ECR) was used to assess attachment style. Data were analyzed using descriptive methods, independent T-test, and Pearson correlation.

The prevalence of depressive symptoms (EPDS total score ≥ 12) in our sample was 14%. Women with EPDS scores ≥ 12 showed higher scores on Anxiety ($r = .3341, p < .0001$) and Avoidance ($r = .2668, p < .0001$) dimension of the ECR. The t-test analysis showed that patients with EPDS score ≥ 12 reported significant higher scores than others on Anxiety (59.09 ± 1.603 vs 39.90 ± 0.5154 respectively; $p < .0001$) and Avoidance (39.60 ± 1.356 vs 28.71 ± 0.3769 , respectively, $p < .0001$). Moreover, higher score on EPDS were negative associated with quality of social relationship dimension of WHOQOL ($r = -.3244^{***}, p < .001$).

Our results pointing out that depressive symptoms are related to a pattern of attachment characterized by concern for romantic relationships, fear of abandonment, difficulty in approaching or depending on others. These preliminary findings are useful to provide personalized psychological interventions in the early stages of pregnancy and to prevent psychological distress of women and couples.

Psychological wellbeing in pregnant women before and during COVID-19 pandemic. Does partner's social support constitute a protective factor?

*Martina Smorti*¹, *Lucia Ponti*², *Chiara Ionio*³, *Angelica Andreol*⁴, *Lucia Bonassi*⁴

¹ Dipartimento di Patologia chirurgica, medica, molecolare e dell'area critica, Università di Pisa

² Dipartimento di Educazione, Lingua, Intercultura, Letteratura e Psicologia, Università di Firenze

³ Dipartimento di Psicologia, Università Cattolica di Milano, Milano

⁴ ASST Bergamo Est Dipartimento di Salute Mentale, Seriate.

Abstract

Introduction: The COVID-19 pandemic and consequent lockdown represent risk factors for the mental health of pregnant women. Pregnant women during pandemic showed higher level of anxiety and depression than those pregnant in the antecedent period (Salari et al., 2020). One of the major concerns of Italian pregnant women is related to the possibility that family members may not be present during the perinatal period may apply to hospitalization, labor, and childbirth while restriction policies in hospital settings are in place. Guidelines in fact did not allow partner to be present during labor (Ravaldi et al., 2020).

We explored the impact of COVID-19 restriction policies on psychological health, analyzing the predictive role of social support on maternal wellbeing.

Method: A total of 212 pregnant women recruited from two public hospitals in Italy were divided into two groups: 1) a pre-COVID-19 group composed of 141 expectant women (Mage=34.6; SD=4.3) at their third trimester before the national lockdown period; 2) a COVID-19 group composed of 71 pregnant women (Mage=33.3; SD=4.5) at their third trimester during the COVID-19 national lockdown. Participants completed two self-report questionnaires: the Profile of Mood States and the Multidimensional Scale of Perceived Social Support.

Results: MANOVA showed that pregnant women during COVID-19 presented higher anxiety, depression, and hostility, and lower vigor, than the pre-COVID-19 group. Linear regression showed that perceived partner social support represented a protective factor only for the pre-COVID-19 women.

Conclusions: Partner during COVID-19 pandemic seems not to be a support for pregnant women as it happened during pre-COVID. Limitations, strengths, and theoretical and clinical implications are discussed.

The impact of emotional dysregulation on interpersonal functioning and physiological aspects in borderline personality disorder

Gea Elena Spada¹, Marco Galli¹, Roberta Bortolla¹

¹IRCCS San Raffaele Hospital, Vita-Salute San Raffaele University (Milan)

Abstract

Borderline Personality Disorder (BPD) is characterized by difficulties in emotional regulation, this aspect too often leads to dysfunctional behaviors as self-harm, suicide, risky behaviors, promiscuous and dysregulated sexual behaviors. BPD show also altered interpersonal functioning, manifested by a bias in interpreting others' intentions, a marked sense of rejection, and intense reactions to social interactions. We aimed to delve how autonomic balance and emotional dysregulation interact in the context of interpersonal relationship in BPD.

We selected interpersonal video-clip stimuli in order to recreate a romantic relationship situation and we evaluated psychophysiological aspects in 30 participants with a BPD diagnose.

The task included 8 clips for each of the four selected category (positive, negative, erotic and neutral relationships) and 2 clips for each sexual orientation (heterosexual couples, male homosexuals, female homosexuals) for a total of 24 clips.

Then, we matched BDP group with a healthy control group to identify differences and potential vulnerabilities in BPD.

Our data are expected to reveal altered autonomic response and dysfunctional emotional regulation in BPD. Moreover, we expect to find differences in both psychological and physiological data between the two groups.

Investigating the central symptoms of problematic social networking sites use through network analysis

Andrea Sviccher¹

¹Department of Health Sciences, Section of Psychology, University of Florence, Florence

Abstract

Various scholars suggest the need to clarify the specific beliefs, motivations, and behaviors that characterize problematic social networking sites use (PSNSU). However, an analysis of the structure of PSNSU in this perspective is still lacking. In the current study, the Generalized Problematic Internet Use Scale-2 adapted for PSNSU was administered to a large gender-balanced sample of undergraduates (n =

1344 participants; males = 51.9%; mean age (\pm SD) = 22.50 \pm 2.20 years). Network analysis was used to evaluate (a) which symptoms (nodes) are most central (b) and to clarify associations between symptoms (edges). The graphical network was estimated with the Extended Bayesian Information Criterion (EBIC) with the Least Absolute Shrinkage and Selection Operator (LASSO). The strength index was used to identify the most central nodes. Stability and accuracy were tested to confirm the accuracy of the results. The most central nodes in the network were: (a) deficient self-regulation of one's own use of social networks (strength = 1.30); (b) the tendency to think obsessively about going online (strength = 1.30); (c) the difficulties in resisting the urge to use social media (strength = 1.20); (d) and the preference for communicating with people online rather than face-to-face (POSI; strength = 1.20). This last symptom was strongly connected with the general preference for online social interactions and the feeling of being more comfortable online. Taken together, these results indicated deficient self-regulation and POSI are the central symptoms of PSNSU. The high centrality of deficient self-regulation might be interpreted as a commonality between PSNSU and established behavioral addictions, whereas the high centrality of POSI seems to highlight the degree to which PSNSU shows key peculiar aspects. In any case, these symptoms should be prioritized in theoretical models of PSNSU and could also serve as potential treatment targets for psychological interventions.

Psychological implications of the “back to the origins” journey for adoptees

Giacomo Tognasso¹, Laura Gorla¹, Marco Chistolini², Daniela Russo², Alessandra Santona¹

¹Università degli studi di Milano-Bicocca

²CIAI – Centro Italiano Aiuti all'Infanzia

Abstract

For international adoptees, losing birth parents comes with leaving native culture and birth nation. For this reason, they look for continuity between past and present and need to structure ethnic identity. Birth-country travels could be an attempt to elaborate on the past abandonment and to understand their roots. The current study aimed to investigate memories about the personal experience that a group of adoptees had of the return trip to their homeland.

Participants were 34 (58% males), aged between 12 and 40 (M=24; SD=7.3). They all took the return trip to their homeland with their companions (parents, siblings, friends) in the last 20 years. After the “Back to the origins journey” all the participants fulfilled: a) a specific questionnaire we created to investigate the experience that each participant had of his return trip; b) the MEIM-R to assess the participants' ethnic identity; c) the PWB to assess the participants' psychological well-being after the trip. The

innovative aspect is that we used a quantitative method, starting a new research field in homeland trips' analyses.

The results revealed that the adoptees' emotional experience during the return travel significantly affected their feelings towards adoption itself ($Wald(1) = 4.29, p = .030$). Moreover, return trips changed the sense of belonging both to Italy ($B = .562, p \leq .001$) and to the birth country ($B = .602, p \leq .001$). Most adoptees believed that their return travel was a momentous occasion to increase the overall knowledge about their birth country and its culture.

Our results filled a gap in the literature regarding return trips and could be significant for providing information about how internationally adopted people could deal with their homeland culture. In addition, our research could be significant for giving information to adoptive parents and professionals who work in the adoption field about how they could help internationally adopted children dealing with their homeland culture.

A few psychological considerations about Medea in the Greek Euripidean tragedy

Rosella Tomassoni¹, Leila De Vito¹, Monica Alina Lungu¹

¹ Dipartimento di Scienze Umane, Sociali e della Salute, Università degli Studi di Cassino e del Lazio Meridionale

Abstract

This study provides an example of qualitative analysis of a literary text conducted through the theoretical and methodological tools of the Psychology of Art and Literature. The approach adopted for the analysis of the text follows the type of interpretation of the founder of the Psychology of Art and Literature in Italy with the Senior Professor Antonio Fusco of the University of Cassino. The objective of this study is to analyze the psychological determinants present in the Medea tragedy and, in particular, the motivations underlying the behavior of the protagonist that gave its name to the psychopathological condition defined as the Medea Syndrome.

This discussion is based on the analysis of the Euripidean text with particular attention to the linguistic aspect, meaning language as a mirror of emotional dynamics. Therefore, the tragedy was read in a psychological key, isolating the salient moments of the text in which the emotional activity of the main character emerged significantly. Furthermore, an in-depth analysis of a double matrix was carried out on the selection of significant moments: linguistic-literary and scientific-psychological. It is important to clarify that, with this work, it was not intended to psychoanalyze a literary character by treating him as a real person, but only to identify moments and attitudes in the Medea story that can be traced back to altered emotional states that lead to filicide.

The contradictory aspects that emerged from the analysis of Medea's behavior mean that this character is not part of a precise psychotic canon. Precisely in this lies the originality of the literary character, in whose versatility, Euripides reproduces multiple emotional and psychological states that are not easily isolated in a single case, making her "all mothers who kill their children", without even one of these being able fully to describe it.

Children's dreaming during pandemic

Rosella Tomassoni¹, Eugenia Treglia¹

¹Università degli Studi di Cassino e del Lazio Meridionale

Abstract

Introduction: The Coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic had a strong impact on lifestyle, mental health, emotional experience and sleep of individuals across the globe. It also changed children's daily lives in a consistent way due to home confinement, school closures, parental stressors, distance learning and suspension of sport, cultural and leisure activities. Significant events and threatening situations change the way people sleep and dream (Sandman et al., 2013; Cenat et al., 2020). In particular, based on the continuity hypothesis of dreaming (e.g., Domhoff, 1996; Schredl, 2006), we hypothesized that the dreams of children living under the quarantine/isolation measures of the COVID-19 pandemic would be mainly characterized by negative emotional intensity and the presence of sensory impressions. The aims of this study were to examine the effects of the lockdown caused by the COVID-19 pandemic on children's dreaming and to assess dream content during and after the lockdown. *Methodology:* the research included a sample of 225 subjects (55.2% female; ages 6–12 years, average age 8,5) longitudinally followed for a period of 8 months. We used quali-quantitative dream content analysis and we explored pandemic dream content during the four weeks of the lockdown (from March to April 2020) and after this period (from September to October 2020). *Results:* the analyses of dreams' reports, indicated that participants during lockdown recall dreams characterized by greater vividness, intense sensation and strangeness and marked by strong negative emotions, related to dangerous, violence, fear of contamination, dysmorphophobia, dystopia. Furthermore, dreams during lockdown showed a higher proportion of words related to sadness and anger, and higher average semantic similarities to the terms "contamination", "disease" and "distancing".

Conclusion: Our findings suggest that the pandemic has a substantial impact on the content of children's dreams.

Anger expression and control in emerging adults: the relationship with psychological inflexibility

*Giovanni Tumminaro*¹, *Sabrina Giometto*², *Ersilia Lucenteforte*², *Lisa Compare*¹, *Olivia Bernini*³, *Carmen Berrocal*¹

¹ Department of Surgical, Medical and Molecular Pathology, and Critical Care Medicine, University of Pisa, Italy

² Department of Clinical and Experimental Medicine, University of Pisa, Italy

³ University Counseling Services, University of Pisa, Italy

Abstract

Psychological Inflexibility (PI) refers to the rigid dominance of internal reactions (e.g., thoughts, feelings, memories) over personal values and contingencies in guiding action. Previous research suggests that PI impacts negatively on emotion regulation. This study examined the effect of PI and gender on anger and aggressive behaviour in emerging adulthood, a developmental phase characterized by increased emotionality. Participants were 382 emerging adults (64.4% females; mean age: 22, SD = 2.9) recruited at the University of Pisa, Italy. Males and females were divided into two groups - high and low-PI - based on the Acceptance and Action Questionnaire-II scores. The STAXI-II was used to assess anger dimensions: expressing anger outwardly (AE-O), inward expression of anger (AE-I), attempts to control the expression of anger (AC-O), and inward control of anger (AC-I). ANCOVA analyses were conducted to explore the effects of PI and gender on anger. The interaction effect (gender x PI) was not statistically significant. Females showed lower AC-O and AE-I than males, and this effect was statistically significant. Participants with high PI showed higher scores on the expression dimensions and lower scores on the control facets than participants with low PI. Inflexible individuals are less capable of controlling anger and more prone to express it both internally and externally. Findings support the relevance of addressing PI in emerging adulthood to better understand and prevent anger dysregulation and violence.

Differential mood amplification effects of 'elated' versus 'calm' mental imagery in young adults reporting hypomanic-like experiences

Caterina Vannucci^{1,2,3}, *Mike Bonsall*⁴, *Martina Di Simplicio*⁵, *Aimee McMullan*^{2,6}, *Emily A. Holmes*⁷, *Stephanie Burnett Heyes*²

¹ School of Psychology and Education, University of Bologna, Italy

² School of Psychology, University of Birmingham, U. K

³ MoMiLab Research Unit, IMT School for Advanced Studies, Italy

⁴Department of Zoology, University of Oxford, U. K

⁵Faculty of Medicine, Department of Brain Sciences, Imperial College London, U. K.

⁶Warwick Medical School, University of Warwick, U. K

⁷Department of Psychology, Uppsala University, Sweden

Abstract

Bipolar spectrum disorders are characterized by disabling mood states. Clinical features include (hypo)manic, depressive episodes, and chronic mood instability. Given the deleterious long-term consequences and drop-outs from therapies, further research is demanding. Indeed, we lack a full understanding of the cognitive mechanisms leading to elevated mood, i.e., positive mood amplification. Mental imagery was proposed to act as a cognitive “emotional amplifier”: emotionally charged mental images may boost positive mood (Holmes et al. 2008; O’Donnell et al. 2017). Still, positive mood amplification may be linked to a specific class of positive stimuli, and positive emotions.

Research on subclinical samples may prove fruitful in modelling clinically relevant cognitive mechanisms. Here, a positive mental imagery generation task was used to manipulate mood in participants with high (n=31) vs low (n=30) hypomanic experiences on the MDQ. After randomization to an ‘elated’ or ‘calm’ imagery condition, change in mood was rated using the PANAS (State+) four times.

We hypothesized a stimulus-specificity effect reflected in greater mood increase in high MDQs in the elated condition, and that the effect would be affect-specific, that is, driven by affects typically associated with (hypo)mania, i.e., active mood.

Accordingly, mixed model and time-series analysis showed that in high MDQs mood increased steeply over time in the ‘elated’ condition (Slope: 5.04 1.04), whilst more shallowly in the ‘calm’ one (Slope: 3.26 0.88). Low MDQs did not show any amplification effect. Mixed model analysis of affect subclusters showed that this effect was driven by positive active mood (p<.001).

Results confirm mental imagery as a positive emotional amplifier and show that the mechanism may be specific in terms of stimuli and affective response. Clinical strategies may be developed to target elated imagery to prevent mood amplification, while promoting calm imagery to retain positive emotionality.

Adaptive coping strategies are associated with post-surgical distress reduction in women with breast cancer diagnosis: a pre-post study

*Veronica Verri*¹, *Chiara Abbatantuono*¹, *Ilaria Pepe*¹, *Paolo Taurisano*¹, *Alessandro Taurino*²,
Marco Moschetti^{2,3}, *Linda Antonella Antonucci*², *Maria Fara De Caro*¹

¹ Dipartimento di Scienze Mediche di Base, Neuroscienze e Organi di Senso, Università degli Studi di Bari Aldo Moro (IT)

² Dipartimento di Scienze della Formazione, Psicologia, Comunicazione, Università degli Studi di Bari Aldo Moro (IT)

³ Dipartimento Emergenza e Trapianti di Organi (D.E.T.O.) – Breast Care Unit, Università degli Studi di Bari Aldo Moro (IT)

Abstract

Introduction: Breast cancer surgery may have a profound impact on women's needs and coping abilities. Additionally, a high percentage of breast cancer survivors report considerable levels of distress that might, however, elicit resilience and adaptive coping strategies, based on situational factors.

Hence, the present study aims at investigating pre-/post-surgery distress variation in women diagnosed with breast cancer, and at better characterizing the potential association between such variation and different types of coping strategies.

Methods: One hundred and fifty women diagnosed with breast cancer (mean age=59.37; SD=±13.23) were administered the Distress Thermometer and the Brief COPE before (T_0) and after (T_1) the surgery (± 7 days). Data were analysed through: (1) the Wilcoxon S-R test, to detect changes in distress levels between T_0 and T_1 ; (2) factor analysis and multiple linear regression, allowing for the prediction of such changes based on types of coping strategies assessed through the Brief COPE. All p values were < 0.05 .

Results: The Wilcoxon S-R test revealed a significant distress reduction from T_0 to T_1 ($T_W = -5.68 < -Z_{\alpha/2} = -1.96$; $p < 0.001$). Factor analysis allowed to extract and rotate through Varimax five distinct components, i.e., 1. active coping and planning; 2. venting + use of emotional and instrumental support; 3. humor + positive reframing + self-blame; 4. denial + behavioral disengagement; 5. religion. Regression analysis revealed that, among these 5 components, lower distress levels at T_1 were significantly predicted by T_0 adaptive coping strategies (e.g., planning; use of emotional support) belonging to the first component ($p = 0.014$).

Conclusion: The present study revealed that T_0 adaptive coping strategies significantly contributed to distress reduction in T_1 . These findings highlight the crucial need of providing psychological support to breast cancer patients in the pre-intervention phase in a timely and individualized way.

A short version of the cognitive emotion regulation questionnaire: psychometric properties in an Italian student sample.

Andrea Zagaria¹, Mariacarolina Vacca¹, Silvia Cerolini¹

¹ Department of Psychology, Sapienza University of Rome.

Abstract

Cognitive Emotion Regulation Questionnaire (CERQ¹) is a largely used tool to assess cognitive emotion regulation strategies. The objective of this study is to validate the Italian 18-item short version of the CERQ (CERQ-S) and to test its psychometric properties. Participants (n=442; M_{age}=21.12; SD=3.69; 69.1% females) completed a battery of self-report questionnaires including the CERQ-S, the emotional regulation questionnaire (ERQ³) and the multidimensional perfectionism scale (MPS⁴). In order to confirm the original CERQ-S nine factor structure, a confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) was computed. Cronbach's alphas were computed to examine the internal consistency of each subscale. Criterion validity was gathered via the analysis of the correlations with the ERQ and the MPS. Factorial invariances tests across age were computed including an additional adolescent sample (n=256; M_{age}=14.81; SD=0.59; 55,5% males). CFA confirmed the nine-factor structure. All fit indices suggested a great fit to the data: $\chi^2(99)=136.73$; CFI=0.982; TLI=0.975; SRMR=0.030; RMSEA=0.029. Except for rumination (.65), all subscales had an acceptable (.70) or greater reliability. ERQ reappraisal score was associated with the CERQ-S positive reappraisal ($r=.409$; $p<.001$). The discriminant validity of the scale was confirmed by several non-significant correlations with the MPS facets. Configural, metric and scalar invariance were reached. Compared to adolescents, young adults reported higher latent means on acceptance, rumination, refocus on planning and positive reappraisal dimensions, while scored lower on positive refocusing dimension. The brevity of this tool and its good psychometric properties suggest that it could be a useful screening tool in both clinical and research practice. Additionally, the factor structure emerged as invariant across age, suggesting that the CERQ-S underlying constructs are structurally similar across the developmental spectrum from adolescence to young adulthood.



©2021 by the Author(s); licensee Mediterranean Journal of Clinical Psychology, Messina, Italy. This article is an open access article, licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 Unported License. Mediterranean Journal of Clinical Psychology, Vol. 9, No. 2 Supplementum (2021).

International License (<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>).

DOI: 10.13129/2282-1619/mjcp-3224