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Titel: Cognitions in cognitive-behavioral psychotherapies: Synthesizing the findings and searching for clarifications

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Abstract:

Different forms of cognitive-behavior therapy (CBT) have ascribed greater importance to one type of cognitions rather than to others. The general purpose of the following studies is first, to investigate the relationships among various types of cognitions postulated to be central in different forms of CBT and second, to examine their relative contribution to psychological distress.

The first study is a meta-analysis who reviewed and synthesized the relation among irrational beliefs and psychological distress (e.g., general distress, depression, anxiety, anger, guilt). Overall, irrational beliefs were significantly and positively associated with psychological distress ( $r = .379$ ,  $CI = .3365$  to  $.4215$ ). There was significant heterogeneity in the effect sizes ( $Q = 904.877$ ,  $p < 0.0001$ ;  $I^2 = 89.0593\%$ ) indicating that one or more study level variables might explain the variability of the effect sizes. More complex models were then fit to account for this variability, which involves inclusion of the proposed moderators using a random effects analysis.

The second study examined the relationships between broad core cognitions (i.e., irrational beliefs), situation-specific automatic thoughts, and response expectancies in regard to their relative contributions to public speaking anxiety. As predicted, response expectancies and negative automatic thoughts specific to public speaking were each found to mediate the relationship between core irrational beliefs and public speaking anxiety. Multiple mediation analysis indicated that the core irrational beliefs generated specific beliefs (i.e., response expectancies that primed automatic thoughts) that acted on speech-related anxiety.

The third study investigated the interrelations among specific descriptive, inferential, and evaluative beliefs in predicting emotional distress prior to a college exam. As predicted, the relationship between specific descriptive/inferential beliefs and emotional distress seems to be mediated by specific evaluative beliefs, in line with the assumptions of REBT as well as with appraisal theory of emotions (Lazarus, 1991).