The Relationship Between Rumination of COVID-19 and Anxiety Levels

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The Relationship Between Ruminative of COVID-19 and Anxiety Levels

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Introduction
The COVID-19 pandemic has caused an increase in psychological distress among individuals around the world (1,2). Rumination is defined as repetitively thinking about negative emotions or events, which may increase distress caused by the pandemic. Rumination about COVID-19 may be related to cancelled events, intolerance of uncertainty, lifestyle changes, or contracting/transmitting the virus. However, it is unknown whether time thinking about COVID-19 impacts this relationship uniquely and directly as well.

Hypothesis

- Hypothesis 1: Tendency to ruminate will be associated with greater anxiety symptoms.
- Hypothesis 2: Time spent thinking about COVID-19 will be associated with greater anxiety symptoms, controlling for rumination.

Results

- A linear regression analysis tested the relationship between rumination, time thinking about COVID-19 and anxiety.
- Results indicated that both rumination, B = .44, p < .001, and time spent thinking about COVID-19, B = 1.05, p = .001, predicted the severity of anxiety symptoms.

Method

Participants
- A sample of 225 undergraduate psychology students (N=225).

Procedure
- Participants completed an online survey in April 2020 evaluating rumination, time spent thinking about COVID-19, and symptoms of anxiety.
- Measures:
  - Time thinking about COVID-19:
    - In the PAST 2 WEEKS, how many hours per day, on average, have you spent thinking or talking about coronavirus? (In hours)
    - Regulation of Emotions Systems Survey (Ruminative Subscale): At the time I experience a negative emotion, I usually respond to it right away by...
  - Ex) Continually thinking about what was bothering me
  - Ex) Generalized Anxiety Disorder-7: Over the PAST 2 WEEKS, how often have you been bothered by the following problems?
  - Ex) Not being able to stop or control worrying

Discussion

- Our results suggest that the tendency to ruminate and time spent thinking about COVID-19 are related to increased anxiety symptoms.
- The current study suggests that limiting one's time thinking about COVID-19 may reduce anxiety.
- Understanding how COVID-19 impacts the psychological mind can aid in targeting this issue in therapy.
- Remaining self-aware of the relationship between ruminative and negative feelings about COVID-19 may improve one's quality of life during the COVID-19 pandemic.

References


