

# Further Cognitive Illuminations of the Worry Process

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Worrying is a common experience in everyday life; it is also prevalent among the anxiety disorders, but has been relatively neglected in clinical research. This has changed recently with the advent of the DSM III-R, where chronic worry is the central defining characteristic of Generalized Anxiety Disorder (GAD) (APA, 1987).

There is a growing body of work that asserts that cognitive processes are central in the initiation and maintenance of anxiety disorders (Beck & Emery, 1985; Clark, 1986; Mathews & MacLeod, 1987). Worrying is a cognitive event, and is found in 40-60% of all anxiety disorders. This study will use chronic worriers and will be primarily cognitive.

First, the study will include background information about the frequency vs. duration of worry episodes. The second part of the study will examine differences in cue perception among worriers. Finally, this study will determine if any gender differences exist among chronic worriers.

This will be a cross-sectional study using a mixed design. The between subject variables will be anxiety and gender, and the within subject variable will be "sphere" presented, depicted by various scenes. There will be approximately 20 experimental and 20 control subjects divided into four groups: male worriers, male controls, female worriers, and female controls. Three independent variables will be: level of worry, gender, and spheres of worry (depicted by different scenes). The dependent variable will be

the types of cues that subjects report.

The importance of this study should not be overlooked. The findings of the present study will point towards future research orientations for other investigators. The implications of this study affect researchers and patients as well. This study can point towards more effective treatment applications that clinicians can use for the benefit of patients.

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