Anxiety Sensitivity Index and Appraisal of Social Concerns as Predictors of TSST-Evoked Cortisol

Yuxuan Zhuang & Robert A. Josephs, Ph.D.
Department of Psychology, University of Texas at Austin

Background

• Social anxiety is characterized as a hypersensitivity in both presence of real-life events and anticipation of stressful events
• Comorbid disorders are highly prevalent in patients with social anxiety disorder, occurring in as many as 90% of patients
• Cognition plays an important role in the development and maintenance of social anxiety disorder
• Anxiety sensitivity index is strongly associated with fearfulness
• Cortisol – a good biomarker of the body’s response to stress; dysregulation can have negative health implications

Hypotheses

• Anxiety sensitivity index and appraisal of social concerns can be the predictors of TSST-evoked cortisol
• There is a positive correlation between anxiety sensitivity index and appraisal of social concerns

Experimental design

• Anxiety Sensitivity Index
• Appraisal of Social Concerns
• Cortisol
• TSST-evoked
• Log transformed
• Measured by area under the curve

Conclusions

• There was no significant correlation between results of self-report cognitive assessments of social anxiety and physiological responses in reality
• Cognition ≠ emotion
• Results of two different self-report cognitive assessments related to social anxiety were positively correlated with each other

Future Directions

• Conduct the study in a clinical population
• Look at the cortisol at various time points
• Consider anticipation of the stressor vs. real presence, and types of stressors

References


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