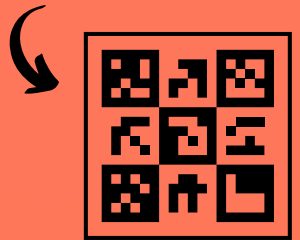


INTRUSIVE THOUGHTS IN OCD: WHAT NOVEL INTRUSIVE THOUGHTS STICK?

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SCAN FOR REFERENCES



Introduction

- Little is known about why only *certain* intrusive thoughts are overinterpreted and become obsessions in OCD
- Some research has suggested that thoughts contradicting important aspects of the self are more likely to become the focus of obsessions^{1,2}
- However, the direction of the relationship between thoughts' contradiction with the self and the distress associated with thoughts remains uncertain

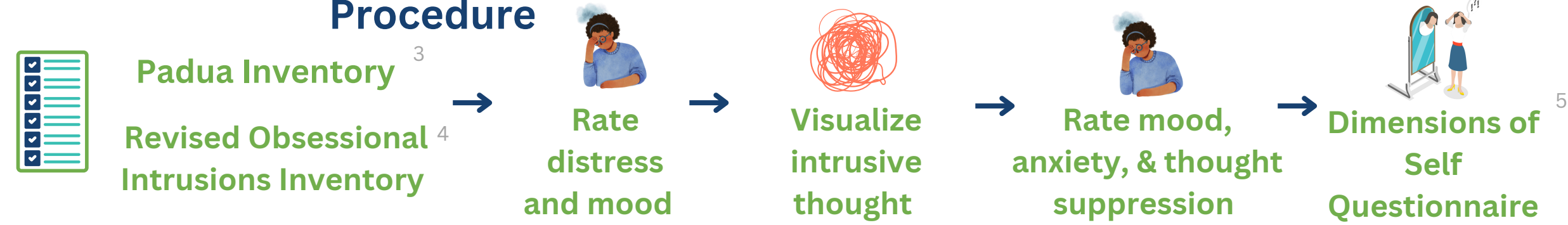
We investigated whether

- Having **distressing intrusive thoughts** leads individuals to **focus on and value certain aspects of the self more**
- Or
- The thoughts' **contradiction with a valued aspect of the self** leads to **distress**

Methodology

- N = 58**
- Report intrusive thought never experienced before but *very upsetting* ($n = 29$)
 - Report intrusive thought never experienced before but *minimally upsetting* ($n = 29$)

Procedure



Intrusive thoughts that contradict important aspects of the self are more “sticky” and are at risk of becoming obsessions for those vulnerable to OCD



Results

	Upsetting Thoughts		Minimally Upsetting Thoughts		
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	
Total importance of self-attributes	26.03	11.22	14.38	9.47	N.S.
Contradiction with important self-attributes	2.52	1.06	1.41	1.04	*
Anxiety during task	51.45	26.16	29.57	28.83	*
Suppression	52.79	30.48	40.00	26.12	*
Motivation to suppress	57.97	27.03	37.41	27.01	*

- Groups did not differ in their total importance ratings across all attributes, (i.e., how important they rated self-attributes) nor in the relative importance of the attribute rated as most important
- Groups did differ on total contradiction ratings, contradiction ratings of the top three most important attributes, and contradiction ratings of attributes rated as important
- Upsetting novel thoughts led to greater anxiety, suppression, and motivation to suppress

Takeaways...

- Novel upsetting intrusive thoughts were rated as contradicting important aspects of the self to a greater degree than less upsetting novel intrusive thoughts
- Hence, the degree to which a thought contradicts valued aspects of the self contributes to distress associated with the thought, rather than the reverse explanation

Limitation: Unbalanced distribution of thought content across groups (e.g., increased aggressive thought in upsetting group)