
ABSTRACT

Factors of uncontrollable worry: An exploratory study

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The process of uncontrollable worry involves two stages, namely, the stage in which worry intrudes on consciousness and the stage of difficulty in disengaging from worry. This study explores the factors of uncontrollable worry and observes these two stages. One hundred and eight university students (25male, 83female; average age: 18.85years) completed open-ended semi-structured questionnaires that required them to describe in their own words why unwanted thoughts of worry were intrusive and why disengaging from worry was difficult. We divided those descriptions into eleven categories for both stages. Results indicated that in the intruding stage, attentional factors, attitude toward worry, negative affect and negative thoughts were central features, while in the second stage, attitude toward worry was the most frequent factor. Based on these results, we discussed the differences between the two stages of controlling worry, clinical implications, and directions for further research.

Key Words: disengaging from worry, intrusive thoughts, uncontrollable worry
