

THE IMPORTANCE OF A SYNCHRONY BETWEEN EMOTION AND MEMORY – CASES WITH DISSOCIATIVE AMNESIA

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Abstract

Episodic or episodic-autobiographical memory is considered to be a significant attribute of human cognition, depending on auto-noetic consciousness and allowing mental time travel into past and future. Furthermore, episodic memory is embedded in an appraisal system, in which individual episodes are evaluated. We used patients with a condition of ‘dissociative amnesia’ in order to study interdependencies between emotion and memory. Dissociative amnesia leads to a blockade of retrieving episodic memories, while the retrieval of general knowledge (“semantic memory”) is still possible usually. Forty-one patients with a diagnosis of dissociative amnesia were investigated neuropsychologically. Sixteen of them were subjected to fluor-positron-emission-tomography to study possible changes in their brain. Main questions were (a) in what ways their old – “forgotten” – memories differ from newly acquired ones, and (b) what are possible brain mechanisms leading to the dichotomy between emotional and non-emotional memory retrieval, respectively failure of retrieval. Results indicate that the forgotten or blocked personal memories are much more complex and self-centered than the semantic ones and require more effort for retrieval. Furthermore, blocked memories seem to remain in a subconscious, disconnected state, hindering the proper association between cognition and emotion. It was found that the failure of episodic retrieval is accompanied by a dysfunction or desynchronization between emotion- and fact-processing regions of the brain.

Keywords: *Consciousness, brain, affect, self.*

SELF-DESTRUCTIVE BEHAVIORS, SELF-ESTEEM, ANXIETY, AND SOCIAL DESIRABILITY IN PEOPLE WITH PERSONALITY AND MOOD DISORDERS

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Abstract

Personality and mood disorders impede everyday functioning, cause serious problems with relationships and work. They interfere with everyday situations generating problems with adaptive ways of coping with stress. The rigid and unhealthy way of thinking and behaving characteristic for personality or mood disorders creates many problems relating to situations and people. It also provokes many difficult reactions in response to stress, such as self-destructive behaviors. As it is stated in the literature, self-destructive behaviors are related to self-esteem, social approval, and anxiety level. In the presented study the analysis of relations between data on self-destruction, self-esteem, social desirability, and anxiety level was conducted. A group of 100 respondents, including 79 women, and 21 men age 18-60 (M=31.91; SD=8.22) were asked to fill in set of questionnaires. Among all subjects there were 43 persons without any diagnosis, 22 people with mood disorder diagnosis, and 35 respondents with personality disorders. All diagnosis were conducted by psychiatrists based on ICD-10 diagnostic criteria. The test battery filled in by each subject consisted of Self-Destruction Questionnaire, Self-Esteem Scale, State Trait Anxiety Inventory, and Social Desirability Questionnaire. It was discovered that there is a positive correlation between self-destructive behaviors and anxiety. Negative relationship was found between self-destructive behaviors, self-esteem, and social desirability. Additional analysis concerning the link between personality disorder, repression and/ or sensitization of emotional stimuli uncovered that people diagnosed with personality disorders are more prone to high anxiety level and sensitization of emotional stimuli than are the people without such diagnosis. On the other hand, many people without any clinical diagnosis recruit themselves from repressors group.

Keywords: *Self-destructive behaviors, self-esteem, anxiety, social desirability, personality disorders.*
