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Research Paper

Relationship between Anxiety and Defense Mechanism in Anxiety Patients

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to explore the relationship between anxiety and defense mechanism in anxiety patients in District Sirsa (Haryana). The study was designed to assess the relationship between anxiety and defense mechanism in anxiety patients. 120 patients were randomly selected from various Govt. and private hospitals in the district. Sinha Comprehensive Anxiety test by A.K.P Sinha & L.N.K Sinha (1971), along with Defense Mechanism Inventory by N.R Mrinal & Uma Singhal (1971) was administered for collecting the data. The data were analyzed by using Pearson's Product Moment method to see the correlation among anxiety and defense mechanism in the anxiety patients. The findings of the study reveal that Turning Against Object and Reversal (defense mechanism) has positive and high significant correlation with anxiety but no significant correlation with Projection (defense mechanism)

Keywords: *Anxiety, Defense Mechanism, Anxiety Patients.*

Anxiety
Anxiety is your body's natural response to stress. It's a feeling of fear or apprehension about what's to come. The first day of school, going to a job interview, or giving a speech may cause most people to feel fearful and nervous.

What are Anxiety Disorder?
It's normal to feel anxious about moving to a new place, starting a new job, or taking a test. This type of anxiety is unpleasant, but it may motivate you to work harder and to do a better job. Ordinary anxiety is a feeling that comes and goes, but does not interfere with your everyday life. In the case of an anxiety disorder, the feeling of fear may be with you all the time. It is intense and sometimes debilitating. This type of anxiety may cause you to stop doing things you enjoy. In extreme cases, it may prevent you from entering an elevator, crossing the street, or even leaving your home. If left untreated, the anxiety will keep getting worse. Anxiety disorders are the most common form of emotional disorder and can affect anyone at any age. According to the American Psychological Association women are more likely than men to be diagnosed with an anxiety disorder.

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Anxiety is an emotion that predates the evolution of man. Children, adolescents and adults experience anxiety in different forms; while this is visible in some, it can be inferred in others from their physiological and psychological responses. Anxiety also varies in frequency and intensity in different persons, even in response to the same stimulus (Trivedi & Gupta, 2010). It is a generalized state of apprehension or foreboding. There is much to be anxious about. Our health, social relationships, examinations, careers and conditions of the environment are but a few sources of possible concerns. It is normal, and even adaptive, to be somewhat anxious about these aspects of life. Anxiety serves us when it prompts us to seek regular medical checkups or motivates us to study for tests. Anxiety is an appropriate response to threats, but it can be abnormal when its level is out of proportion to a threat. In extreme forms, anxiety can impair our daily functioning.

Anxiety is body natural responses to stress. It's a feeling of fear about what to come. The going to a job interview or giving a speech may cause most people to feel fearful. But if your feelings of anxiety are extreme and are interfering with your life you may have an anxiety disorder.

The National Institute of Mental Health (2008) reports that anxiety is a normal reaction to stress. According to the NIMH, anxiety assists one in dealing with a tense situation and helps him or her work harder toward goal fulfillment. The NIMH states that stress helps in coping with life. However, when anxiety becomes excessive, it can become a disabling disorder.

There are two types of anxiety according to Freud
- **Objective Anxiety:** Realistic response to perceive danger in the environment, Synonymous with fear.
- **Neurotic Anxiety:** Anxiety that comes from an unconscious conflict within the individual since the conflict was unconscious the person is not aware of the reason for his or her anxiety.

Anxiety is multidimensional construct characterized by physiological, cognitive and behavioural responses (Lang, 1968).

According to Taber's Cyclopedic Medical Dictionary (Venes, 2005; and Vanin, 2008), anxiety is a vague, uneasy feeling of discomfort or dread accompanied by an autonomic (self-controlling) response. Anxiety alerts individuals to changes, both within them and in the world around them, as part of an internal signal system.

Defense Mechanism
Defense mechanisms are unconscious mental processes that protect an individual from anxiety. Defense mechanisms are important to clinical practice in understanding personality dynamics and refining diagnostic impressions. Defense mechanisms within the context of the current managed care culture are not generally assessed. The purpose of this study was to examine the relationship between an individual's uses of defense mechanisms when they influence with anxiety. More specifically the study explored the correlation between defense mechanisms and the content, structure, and organization of an individual's drawing. Defense mechanisms are unconscious, theoretical concepts and therefore cannot be seen, but instead must be inferred from observing an individual's behavior (Fraiberg as cited in Kernberg, 1994). Studying the relationship between defense mechanisms and anxiety drawing characteristics offer support for the idea that an individual's artwork, acting as a actual

record of an individual's psyche, offers the clinician a window into the individual's unconscious world. The lack of research concerning the relationship between defense mechanisms and anxiety. This study used a correlational research design to answer the question: What is the relationship between an individual uses of defense mechanisms with influence of anxiety.

Defense mechanisms are psychological strategies brought into play by various entities to cope with reality and to maintain self-image. Healthy persons normally use different defenses throughout life. An ego defense mechanism becomes pathological only when its persistent use leads to maladaptive behavior such that the physical and/or mental health of the individual is adversely affected. The purpose of the Ego Defense Mechanisms is to protect the mind/self/ego from anxiety, social sanctions or to provide a refuge from a situation with which one cannot currently cope. Freud (1923) was the first person to develop the concept of defense mechanisms. The term "defense mechanism" is often thought to refer to a definitive singular term for personality traits which arise due to loss or traumatic experiences, but more accurately refers to several types of reactions, however it was his daughter, Anna Freud, who clarified and conceptualized them. The unconscious nature of defenses means that the information is so stressful that the mind refuses to allow it immediately into consciousness; instead, defenses are brought into play that allow the individual to continue on "as if" nothing were wrong.. The fact that "individuals repeatedly employ the same defenses across different circumstances" adds to the picture of a person unable to deal rationally with wide variety of situations.

Anna Freud (1936) described ten different defense mechanisms: denial, displacement, intellectualization, projection, rationalization, reaction formation, regression, repression, sublimation, and suppression.

Ujwalal and Jigmat (2011) studied was to compare sports competitive anxiety among male and female state level baseball players, who participated in 3rd senior state level Maharashtra baseball champion. In this study Sports Competitive Anxiety Test (SCAT Martin et al., 1990) was used to measure sports competitive anxiety. Questionnaire was distributed among 40 (20 each) male and female players 30 minutes before the warm-up session. Descriptive statistics (mean and standard deviation) and t-test were used to analysis the data. The results showed significant difference ($p<0.05$) in sports competitive anxiety between male and female state level baseball players.

Parker et al. 2012 – reported that social isolation induces a stressful response in zebra fish, which reflects in fear on anxiety-related behaviour in novel environments, and research on shoaling behaviour in this animal may also be useful for understanding the role of social cues on fear and anxiety-related parameters.

Woud, Postma, Holmes & Mackintosh (2013) found that when participants were given interpretation bias modification prior to exposure to an extremely distressing film, they were less likely to experience disturbing intrusive thoughts subsequently.

Craig & Tran (2014) found that, relative to people who do not stutter, adults with chronic stuttering significantly elevated levels of anxiety, especially social anxiety. They argued that these differences result from the negative effects of stuttering across the lifespan, probably beginning in childhood.

Cramer (2015) defines defense mechanisms as constructs acting as a counterforce against the push of the drivers for discharge. Individuals using more adaptive coping styles, such as task-oriented coping, are characterized by greater ego strength and use of more mature defense mechanism than those presenting less adaptive styles such as emotional and avoidant oriented.

METHODOLOGY

In the present study the correlational research method has been chosen to study the relationship between anxiety and defense mechanism among patients suffering from anxiety.

Sample of the study

In the present study the sample consisted of a total of a 120 Patients of anxiety disorder in which 60 male and 60 female Patients and the data will be collected from Private Hospitals of Sirsa district.

Objectives of the study

To study the relationship between various Defense Mechanism and Anxiety.

Hypothesis of the study

There will be no significant relationship between various Defense mechanism and Anxiety.

Tools used in the study

For the present study following tools were used: -

Defense Mechanism Inventory by N.R Mrinal & Uma Singhal (1971)

The DMI consisted of twelve stories, two of each of six conflict areas. The conflict areas are related with authority, independence, masculinity, femininity and competition and situational. Like the original version the response alternatives were revised several times to see whether each set of five responses with the five defense mechanism is in accordance of the definition provided by Glesser and Lhilievich(1969) responses with five defenses. Test-Retest reliability for the five defenses from 0.80 to 0.92 for a weal interval and from 0.64 to 0.85 over 3 month's interval. Construct Validation- 15 defenses were provided by Glesser and Lhilievich (1969) to three psychologists and seven social workers and they were asked to match each of the 240 responses of the original DMI with the one defense from the list. They found satisfactory agreement on TAS, REV and PRN but not on TAO and PRO since the present inventory is in Hindi the process were repeated. The responses on TAO and PRO were changed whenever they were not found indicating those defenses.

Anxiety test by A.K.P Sinha & L.N.K Sinha (1971)

The test of anxiety in existence both Indian and foreign, the present authors found that they were not covering certain facets of anxiety. Further there existed a good deal of disagreement and confusion concerning the concept of anxiety. Several aspects of anxiety appeared to be ignored. All these considerations led to the development of this comprehensive test of anxiety incorporating a variety of anxiety indices proposed by different investigators from time to time, keeping in view the conditions available in this country.

Statistical techniques

To analyses the data Pearson's Product Moment method of correlation was used.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The objective of the study to find out the correlation between study variables. The table is an inter-correlation matrix of different variables i.e., Defense mechanism (Turning Against Object (TAO), Projection (PRO), Principalization (PRN), Turning Against self (TAS), Reversal (REV) and anxiety obtained from 120 Anxiety Disorder Patients. The correlation with all the variables was computed by applying Pearson product movement method. The results are summarized in table.

Table Inter-correlation matrix for Defense Mechanism and Anxiety, obtained form 120 Anxiety Disorder Patients

Variables	Turning Against Object	Projection	Principalization	Turning Against Self	Reversal
Anxiety	.346**	.157	.217*	.204*	.314**

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)
*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed)

The obtained value of 'r' for the turning against object and anxiety is .346. The calculated 'r' is greater than the tabulated value of 'r'. It indicates that there is significant correlation between Anxiety and TAO. It means that if person is more anxious uses more Defense mechanism. The reason behind that due to anxiety not able to perform their duties so that in their daily routine life start uses defense mechanism. Turning against object is a destructive type of defense mechanism. In this category the person does something as a substitute for something else. Such classical defenses as identification with the aggressor and displacement can be placed in this category. This class of defenses deals with conflict through attacking a real or presumed external frustrating object. Whereby person expresses his or her feelings indirectly to an object. Sometimes it happens that certain people do not find any substitute for their aggression. In such cases suicide is committed.

The obtained value of 'r' for the projection and anxiety is .157. The calculated 'r' is not greater than the tabulated value of 'r'. It indicates that there is no significant but positive correlation between Anxiety and TAO.

The obtained value of 'r' for the Anxiety and principalization, Anxiety and turning against self and Anxiety and Reversal is .217, .204 and .314 respectively. The calculated 'r' is greater than the tabulated value of 'r' significant. The Projection includes the defenses which justify the expression of aggression towards an external object through first attributing to it, without unequivocal evidence, negative intent, or characteristics. It means to project one's feelings, thoughts' hopes, ambitions, frustrations, fears, interest and urges on some external objects, the common tendency to blaming other for our mistakes is example of projection.

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Conflict of Interest
The author(s) declared no conflict of interest.