



PERGAMON

Behaviour Research and Therapy 36 (1998) 403–416

**BEHAVIOUR
RESEARCH AND
THERAPY**

Obsessionality and the attempted suppression of unpleasant personal intrusive thoughts

Patricia C. Rutledge

Department of Social and Behavioral Sciences, Lincoln University, Jefferson City, MO 65102-0029, USA

Received 3 October 1997

Abstract

To explore the role of the thought enhancement and thought rebound effects in obsessionality, the relationship between obsessional symptomology and responding during and after the attempted suppression of unpleasant personal intrusive thoughts was examined. Ss first completed the Maudsley Obsessive Compulsive Inventory (MOCI) [Rachman and Hodgson, 1980]. Later, Ss indicated their most frequent intrusive thought and then completed a thought suppression protocol in which they first expressed, then suppressed, and, again, expressed that thought. Ss' scores on the MOCI were examined in relation to their pattern of responding in the suppression protocol to investigate whether Ss who were higher in obsessionality were more prone to enhancement and/or rebound effects with an unpleasant personal intrusive thought than Ss who were lower in obsessionality. The following results were obtained: (1) there was a positive relationship between obsessionality levels and thought enhancement for female Ss; (2) there was a negative relationship between obsessionality levels and thought enhancement for male Ss; and (3) there was no relationship between obsessionality levels and thought rebound. These findings suggest that the rebound effect is unrelated to obsessionality and that the enhancement effect relationship to obsessionality may be more complex than previously hypothesized. © 1998 Elsevier Science Ltd. All rights reserved.

1. Introduction

Beginning with the experiments of Wegner et al. (1987), evidence has been accruing that attempting to suppress a thought results in an increase in the frequency of that thought once efforts at suppression cease (e.g., Clark et al., 1991, 1993; Macrae et al., 1994; Wegner et al., 1991; Zeitlin et al., 1995). Generally, these studies have demonstrated that individuals who first attempt to suppress a thought, subsequently experience more instances of the thought than individuals who do not first attempt suppression; a phenomenon called the *rebound effect*. Although thought rebound has not been observed by all researchers (e.g., LoSchiavo and

Yurak, 1995; Merckelbach et al., 1991; Muris et al., 1992; Rutledge et al., 1993, Exp. 1; Smári et al., 1994), this effect has generated a great deal of interest as a parsimonious explanation for thought preoccupation and obsessionality (e.g., Wegner, 1988, 1989). Other researchers, however, have focused on the role of thought *enhancement* during attempted suppression in the formation of preoccupations and obsessions (e.g., Lavy and van den Hout, 1990; Muris et al., 1992). Although both the rebound and enhancement effects involve the attempted suppression of a thought, the enhancement effect is observed *during* attempted suppression, while the rebound effect is observed *after* attempted suppression. Generally, studies of thought enhancement have demonstrated that individuals instructed to suppress a thought, experience more instances of the thought during the suppression attempt than individuals not instructed to suppress the thought. Like thought rebound, thought enhancement has not been found in all studies (e.g., Clark et al., 1991).

Most thought suppression studies have examined the effect of suppressing experimenter-provided thoughts, however, a few recent studies have examined the effect of suppressing a person's own intrusive thought (Kelly and Kahn, 1994; Salkovskis and Campbell, 1994; Smári et al., 1995; Trinder and Salkovskis, 1994). The reasoning behind these studies is aptly described by Salkovskis and Campbell (1994) who point out that, "in order to investigate the phenomenon of thought suppression in relation to obsessional problems, it would seem most appropriate to target personally relevant and naturally occurring thoughts which Ss report that they normally attempt to suppress to some extent" (p. 2). That is, examining individuals' responses while they try to suppress their own intrusive thoughts (such as the thought of a loved one being in an automobile accident) is more appropriate to the study of obsessionality than is examining individuals' responses while they try to suppress experimenter-provided thoughts (such as the thought of a white bear). If thought enhancement and thought rebound effects are related to real-world obsession and thought preoccupation, these effects should be observed when people attempt to suppress their own personal intrusive thoughts.

Evidence of an enhancement effect with negative personal intrusive thoughts has been obtained in two studies (Salkovskis and Campbell, 1994; Trinder and Salkovskis, 1994). Salkovskis and Campbell (1994) observed that Ss who attempted to suppress a negative personal intrusive thought had more instances of the thought during attempted suppression than Ss who did not attempt to suppress the thought. Similarly, Trinder and Salkovskis (1994) found that Ss who attempted to suppress a negative personal intrusive thought outside of the laboratory over a four-day period had more instances of the thought than Ss who did not attempt to suppress the thought, demonstrating that the enhancement effect is not confined to the laboratory. These findings of an enhancement effect with Ss' own unpleasant intrusive thoughts provide evidence for the hypothesis that attempted thought suppression underlies real-world thought preoccupation and obsession. In contrast with these thought enhancement findings, research has failed to provide evidence of the thought rebound effect with unpleasant personal intrusive thoughts (Kelly and Kahn, 1994; Salkovskis and Campbell, 1994; Smári et al., 1995) and with pleasant personal intrusive thoughts (Kelly and Kahn, 1994). This failure to find a rebound effect with personal intrusive thoughts is inconsistent with the hypothesis that the rebound effect underlies thought preoccupation and obsessionality. It should be emphasized, however, that none of the aforementioned studies specifically examined the relationship between thought enhancement and thought rebound effects with personal intrusive

متن کامل مقاله

دریافت فوری ←

ISIArticles

مرجع مقالات تخصصی ایران

- ✓ امکان دانلود نسخه تمام متن مقالات انگلیسی
- ✓ امکان دانلود نسخه ترجمه شده مقالات
- ✓ پذیرش سفارش ترجمه تخصصی
- ✓ امکان جستجو در آرشیو جامعی از صدها موضوع و هزاران مقاله
- ✓ امکان دانلود رایگان ۲ صفحه اول هر مقاله
- ✓ امکان پرداخت اینترنتی با کلیه کارت های عضو شتاب
- ✓ دانلود فوری مقاله پس از پرداخت آنلاین
- ✓ پشتیبانی کامل خرید با بهره مندی از سیستم هوشمند رهگیری سفارشات