

CREENCIAS Y ACTITUDES DE LA POBLACIÓN ESPAÑOLA SOBRE LA ANSIEDAD HACIA LA ENFERMEDAD.

INTRODUCCIÓN

El interés de este estudio es explorar las creencias de la población sobre la ansiedad hacia la enfermedad, también conocida como hipocondría. Los modelos cognitivos conductuales conciben, aunque a menudo obvian, el papel de los factores ambientales en el desarrollo del trastorno por ansiedad hacia la enfermedad (Taylor, Jang, Stein & Asmundson, 2008). La sociedad es un factor ambiental fundamental que no se ha analizado hasta ahora. Con este estudio queremos descubrir las creencias de una muestra de la población española sobre la ansiedad hacia la enfermedad con el objetivo de describirlas y que así puedan utilizarse para concienciar a la población de los problemas que estas personas suelen tener en relación con cierto estigma hacia a la enfermedad.

Objetivo: Descubrir las creencias, conocimientos y actitudes de personas de la población española en relación con la ansiedad hacia la enfermedad, así como el papel de la edad en estas creencias.

MÉTODO

El cuestionario fue elaborado a través de la plataforma Qualtrics. Su difusión se realizó a través de redes sociales mediante un enlace.

Estudio observacional transversal obteniendo una muestra de 297 participantes con una media de edad de 38,69 años y desviación típica 13,01, siendo el sexo mayoritario femenino (71%). Se elaboró un cuestionario sociodemográfico y 71 preguntas relacionadas con creencias hacia las personas con ansiedad hacia la enfermedad que nos debería permitir obtener una visión global de las creencias respecto a la hipocondría. Los datos fueron analizados a través del programa SPSS versión 24.

RESULTADOS

Los resultados mostraron que las creencias erróneas más extendidas están relacionadas con la información, exageración, invención de los síntomas y cuidados que requieren las personas con ansiedad hacia la enfermedad.

También hemos encontrado una relación significativa en cuanto a la edad y las creencias hacia esta población, siendo el estigma mayor en personas de edad más avanzada. No se realizan análisis por género por la poca variabilidad de esa variable en la muestra recogida.

DISCUSIÓN

Encontramos algunos estigmas en la población general en referencia a exageración de los síntomas y a los rasgos de personalidad de las personas con ansiedad hacia la enfermedad.

Proponemos futuras campañas de sensibilización a través de redes sociales y en los centros de salud, realizando acciones formativas sobre todo dirigidas a población de mayor edad.

Palabras clave: Hipocondría, creencias, ansiedad por enfermedad, estigma.

INTRODUCTION

The interest of this study is to explore population beliefs about health anxiety disorder, also known as hypochondriasis. Cognitive behavioral models conceive of, but often obviate, the role of environmental factors in the development of health anxiety disorder (Taylor, Jang, Stein & Asmundson, 2008). Society is a fundamental environmental factor that has not been analyzed so far. With this study we want to discover the beliefs of a sample of the Spanish population about health anxiety disorder with the aim of describing them so that they can be used to make the population aware of the problems that these people usually have in relation to a certain stigma towards the disease.

Objective: To discover the beliefs, knowledge and attitudes of people in the Spanish population in relation to health anxiety disorder, as well as the role of age in these beliefs.

METHOD

The questionnaire was elaborated through the Qualtrics platform. It was disseminated through social networks by means of a link.

Cross-sectional observational study obtaining a sample of 297 participants with a mean age of 38.69 years and standard deviation of 13.01, with the majority being female (71%). A sociodemographic questionnaire and 71 questions related to beliefs towards people with health anxiety disorder were elaborated, which should allow us to obtain a global vision of the beliefs regarding hypochondriasis.

The data were analyzed using SPSS version 24.

RESULTS

The results showed that the most widespread erroneous beliefs are related to information, exaggeration, invention of symptoms and care required by people with anxiety towards the disease.

We also found a significant relationship in terms of age and beliefs towards this population, with stigma being higher in older people. Analyses by gender are not performed due to the low variability of this variable in the sample collected.

DISCUSSION

We found some stigmas in the general population in reference to exaggeration of symptoms and personality traits of people with health anxiety disorder.

We propose future awareness campaigns through social networks and in health centers, carrying out training actions especially aimed at the older population.

Keywords: Hypochondria, beliefs, health anxiety disorder, stigma.

BELIEFS AND ATTITUDES OF THE SPANISH POPULATION ABOUT HEALTH ANXIETY DISORDER

Degree Final Project in Psychology 2020-2021

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INTRODUCTION

Cognitive-behavioral models conceive of, but often ignore, the role of environmental factors in the development of disease anxiety, also known as hypochondriasis. (Taylor, Jang, Stein & Asmundson, 2008).

Although people with disease anxiety do not simulate, exaggerate, or fake physical symptoms, they are very often judged.

- The stigma associated with health anxiety compounds the psychological suffering of people with hypochondria, who often have difficulty functioning on a day-to-day basis.
- People with disease anxiety often find little support from their environment, which very often undervalues their symptoms and suffering.

Objective

Taking into account the scarcity of empirical studies, the aim of this study is to discover the beliefs, knowledge and attitudes of people in the Spanish population towards people with health anxiety disorder.

METHODS

Design: Observational study approved by the Ethics Committee of the Universitat Jaume I.

Questionnaire:

Sociodemographics

Beliefs and attitudes towards people with anxiety (71 items, multiple-choice response).

Questionnaire completion: Qualtrics platform

Dissemination: Social networks

Sample: 297 persons with an average age of 38.69 years (SD=13.01)

71% women

63.3% in a relationship/married.

61.6% were working - 20.9% were studying - the rest did not work.

Data analysis: SPSS program version 24, performing descriptive analysis and Student t-test for independent samples.

RESULTS

The results showed that the most widespread erroneous beliefs are related to information, exaggeration, invention of symptoms and care required by people with health anxiety disorder.

As shown in Figure 1, the most widespread erroneous beliefs are related to information, exaggeration, invention of symptoms and care required by people with health anxiety disorder.

Significant differences in beliefs across age groups: We found significant differences in 7 out of 71 beliefs, always showing more stigma by older individuals.

As shown in Figure 2, Some age differences were small (d between 0.20 and 0.35), but three of them were large (d between 0.75 and 1.10)

DISCUSSION

Overall it appears that in our sample there is no excessively high stigma. However, we found some stigma in the general population in reference to exaggeration of symptoms by people with health anxiety disorder.

We propose future awareness campaigns, through social networks, carrying out training actions on the problems of people with health anxiety disorder, especially aimed at the older population.

Limitations

- Greater representation of women in the sample.
- Incomplete responses to the questionnaire.

Figure 1. MOST FREQUENT ESTIGMAS OR MALADAPTIVE BELIEFS ABOUT HEALTH ANXIETY DISORDERS

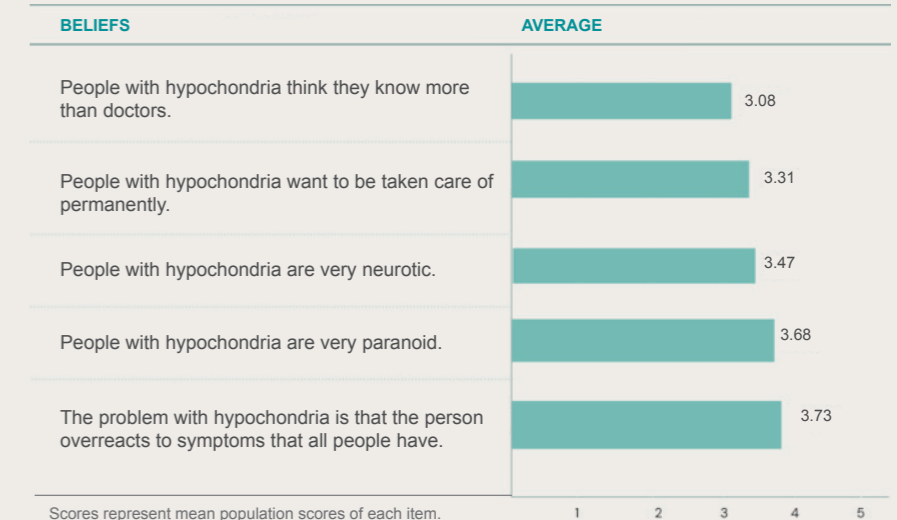
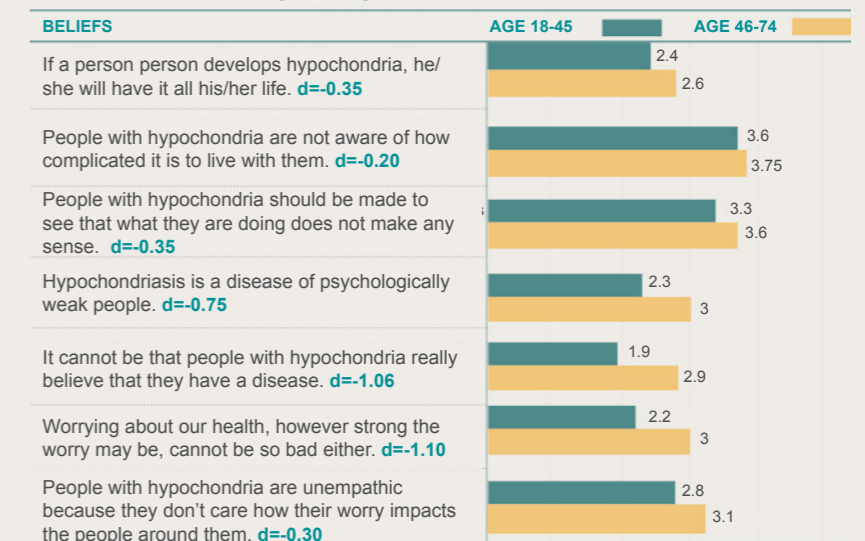


Figure 2. ESTIGMA AND MALADAPTIVE BELIEFS IN WHICH AGE DIFFERENCES EMERGED



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