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FACTOR STRUCTURES OF THE CHILDREN'S DEPRESSION INVENTORY: A META-ANALYSIS OF PATTERN MATRICES

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This study used meta-analysis to comprehensively examine the factor analysis of the Children's Depression Inventory (CDI). Twenty-five studies (N =18,897) consisting of 36 independent samples were identified. Generally, the CDI comprises five factors: Self-Depreciation, Somatic Concerns, Externalizing, Lack of Personal and Social Interest, and Dysphoric Mood. When reviewing individual items, the results of this meta-analysis suggest that self-depreciation had salient loadings on factors similar to Self-Depreciation, Externalizing, and Somatic Concerns. The variability in this item makes self-depreciation a poor marker for symptoms of Self-Depreciation, Externalizing, and Somatic Concerns, and hence suggests that it should be revised or excluded in future revisions of the CDI.

The equivalence of factor structure is a prerequisite to comparing mean scores across groups. Hence, the factor structure of the CDI was examined for subgroups of studies. The 5-factor structure of the CDI was generally appropriate except in studies assessing depression of at-risk/clinical participants and participants using non-English versions of the CDI. For studies assessing depression among at-risk/clinical participants and participants using non-English versions of the CDI, factors similar to Self-Depreciation, Lack of Personal and Social Interest, and Externalizing were identified. The at-risk/clinical samples had an independent factor of Depressive Mood and Loneliness, while studies using non-English versions of the CDI had an independent factor of Sadness and Somatic. Notably, the factor of Somatic Concerns was not identified in at-risk/clinical samples and items of sleep disturbance, fatigue, and reduced appetite had no salient loadings.