
DEPRESSIVE COGNITION DOES NOT DISCRIMINATE BURNOUT FROM DEPRESSION

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Introduction. Whether burnout is a form of depression or a distinct nosological entity is unclear. In addition, the cognitive style associated with burnout remains poorly characterized.

Objectives. The aim of the present study was to examine whether depressive cognition (ruminative responses, dysfunctional attitudes, and depressive attributions) discriminates burnout from depression.

Methods. A total of 277 Northern American teachers were included in this study. Burnout was assessed with the Shirom-Melamed Burnout Measure ($\alpha = .95$) and depression with the 9-item depression-dedicated module of the Patient Health Questionnaire ($\alpha = .85$). With regard to depressive cognition measurement, each participant completed the Ruminative Responses Scale, the Dysfunctional Attitudes Scale, and the Depressive Attributions Questionnaire. Data processing was carried out by using IBM® SPSS® Amos (version 22.0.0).

Results. Ruminative responses, dysfunctional attitudes, and depressive attributions were positively and similarly correlated to burnout and depression. Depressive attributions appeared as the strongest predictor of both burnout and depression. Ruminative responses, dysfunctional attitudes, and depressive attributions accounted for about 27% of the variance in burnout and 28% of the variance in depression.

Conclusions. The present study suggests that depressive cognition does not discriminate burnout from depression. Our findings confirm that isolating substantial differences between burnout and depression is difficult, in support of the hypothesis that burnout is essentially a form of depression.