

Hooked on a feeling: Repetitive cognition and internalizing symptomatology in relation to autism spectrum symptomatology

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Thinking about the same thing over and over again (including repetitive negative thoughts, such as those seen in depression) has been shown to relate to symptoms of depression in both typically-developing individuals and those with autism spectrum disorder. Such repetitive thinking is particularly common in autism spectrum disorder, as is depression. This study evaluated the role of repetitive thinking in the relation between autism spectrum symptoms and depression symptoms. Two hundred typically-developing adults completed questionnaires measuring autism spectrum symptoms, different forms of repetitive thinking, depression, and sensitivity to being rejected by others. Repetitive thinking explained the relation between autism spectrum symptoms and depression, and partially explained the relation between autism spectrum symptoms and sensitivity to rejection. We conclude that it is of vital importance to consider such repetitive thinking when trying to explain and treat depression in autism spectrum disorder.