

Abstract

An increasing number of evidence has suggested viewing paranoia as a spectrum, with substantial research finding that paranoia exists in the general population as well. Associations between depressive symptoms, anxiety and paranoia were also evident in the general public. However, the focus of those studies and the measures they used varied a lot, and hence yielded different results. This study aimed to investigate the respective associations of depressive symptoms and anxiety with paranoia in the general population by using a meta-analytic approach. A total of 6214 studies published in 1999-2015 were examined, among which 31 studies were eligible for meta-analyses. Twenty-four studies (24 effect sizes) were included in the first meta-analysis for studying the association between depressive symptoms and paranoia. Twenty-three studies (25 effect sizes) were included in the second meta-analysis for studying the association between anxiety and paranoia. A moderate, positive and robust mean correlation was found in both meta-analyses. This supported our hypothesis that depressive symptoms and anxiety were associated with paranoia positively in the general population.

Keywords: paranoia, persecutory ideation, depressive symptoms, anxiety