

Cognitive Distortions and Decision-Making Patterns in Depressed Adolescents.

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Introduction

Adolescence is a critical period for cognitive and emotional development, and depression during this stage often interferes with rational thinking and behavior. One key aspect of this interference is the presence of **cognitive distortions** irrational and negatively biased thought patterns—that can significantly affect decision-making abilities [1, 2, 3, 4, 5].

Common cognitive distortions seen in depressed adolescents include *catastrophizing* (expecting the worst), *overgeneralization* (drawing broad conclusions from a single event), and *black-and-white thinking* (seeing situations in extremes). These distorted thoughts can lead adolescents to make decisions based more on emotion than logic, often resulting in poor academic performance, social withdrawal, or risky behaviors [6, 7, 8].

Moreover, depression can impair executive functions such as planning, problem-solving, and impulse control. When combined with cognitive distortions, these deficits can cause adolescents to misjudge consequences, underestimate their strengths, and choose maladaptive coping strategies [9, 10].

Conclusion

Cognitive distortions play a significant role in shaping the decision-making patterns of depressed adolescents, often pushing them toward negative outcomes. Early psychological interventions such as cognitive-behavioral therapy (CBT) can help challenge these distortions, improve cognitive flexibility, and support healthier decision-making during this vulnerable life stage.

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