

COGNITIVE AND AFFECTIVE DIMENSIONS INVOLVED IN MENTAL HEALTH OF INFERTILE COUPLES

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Objective

The main goal is to analyze the relationships among some of the cognitive and affective processes involved in stress coping, cognitive dimensions of personality, and mental health of men and women with reproductive dysfunctions or infertility.

Method:

Three-hundred eighteen individuals participated, of which 58.8% are women [mean age = 35.62 years (SD= 4.33), slightly higher in men ($p < .05$)]. To assess the cognitive processes, the Spanish Cognitive and Affective Empathy Test (TECA) was used, the cognitive dimensions were evaluated by the cognitive scales of the Millon Index of Personality Styles (1994), and mental health was assessed by the General Health Questionnaire GHQ-12 (Sánchez-López & Dresch, 2008). Main statistical methods were Mean comparisons and Pearson correlations.

Results

The results showed that both men and women obtained higher scores than their counterparts in the normative population for: Adoption of Perspectives, Emotional Understanding and Empathic Joy. The women in our sample obtained significant higher scores than men in three of the four affective and cognitive scales: Emotional Understanding ($p < .001$), Empathic Stress ($p < .000$) and Empathic Joy ($p < .033$). In men, the results showed only significant associations between poor Mental Health and personality, on the scales of Extraversion ($r = -0.37$), Introversion ($r = -0.36$) and Systematization ($r = -0.32$). In women, significant associations were found between poor Mental Health, Empathic stress ($r = 0.25$), Extroversion ($r = -0.34$), Introversion ($r = -0.34$) and Feeling ($r = 0.36$).

Table 1. Descriptive statistics, and Student's t Test for men and women participants and normative values in DERA scales

TECA Scales Men (n=143)	M	DT	t (142)
Adoption of Perspectives	28.81	5.36	2.37*
Emotional Understanding	30.12	5.69	3.38**
Empathic Stress	22.67	9.68	1.14
Empathic Joy	32.24	7.16	3.36**
TOTAL SCORE	112.33	16.42	2.99**
TECA Scales Women (n=168)	M	DT	t (167)
Adoption of Perspectives	29.54	4.66	0.60
Emotional Understanding	32.33	5.49	2.56*
Empathic Stress	26.78	5.47	0.90
Empathic Joy	33.65	4.23	3.58***
TOTAL SCORE	121.94	16.63	1.94*

Notes: * $p \leq .05$; ** $p < .01$; *** $p < .001$

Table 2. Pearson's correlations between TECA scales, poor mental health and MIPS cognitive scales, in men and women.

MEN	Poor Mental Health	4A	4B	6A	6B	7A
Poor Mental Health	-	-.37***	.36***	-.19*	-.09	-.32***
Adoption of Perspectives	-.02	.05	-.09	-.21*	.02	-.01
Emotional Understanding	-.11	.22**	-.22**	-.09	.26**	.20*
Empathic Stress	.10	.03	.04	.06	.11	.09
Empathic Joy	.00	.03	-.04	.11	-.09	.12
TOTAL SCORE TECA	-.12	.27**	-.24**	-.33***	.35***	.09
WOMEN	Poor Mental Health	4A	4B	6A	6B	7A
Poor Mental Health	-	-.34***	.36***	-.04	.25**	-.16*
Adoption of Perspectives	.12	.21**	-.16*	-.18*	.16*	.10
Emotional Understanding	-.04	.22**	-.20*	-.16*	.15	.08
Empathic Stress	.25**	-.04	.13	-.19*	.48***	.00
Empathic Joy	.08	.14	-.08	-.24**	.19*	-.02
TOTAL SCORE TECA	.11	.17*	-.10	-.25**	.35***	.09

Notes: 4A: Extraversion (Externally Focused), 4B: Introversion (Internally Focused), 6A: Withdrawal Asocial/ withdrawing) 6B: Feeling (Feeling-Guided), 7A: Systematization (Conservation-Seeking). * $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$; *** $p < .001$



Conclusions:

The associations found in our study, identify affective and cognitive dimensions related to the psychological health of individuals going through infertility processes, which can guide psychological support programs aimed at these people.

REFERENCES:
Millon, T. (1994). *Millon Index of Personality Styles*. San Antonop. TX: The Psychological Corporation. [Adaptación española: Sánchez-López, M.P., Díaz, J.F. y Aparicio, M. (2001). MIPS: Inventario de Estilos de Personalidad de Millon.
Sánchez-López, M.P. & Dresch, V. (2008). Cuestionario de Salud General de 12 Items (GHQ-12): fiabilidad, validez externa, y la estructura factorial en la población española. *Psicothema*, 20, 839-843.