

Are suggestible people more likely to change their belief in the occurrence of autobiographical events?

BACKGROUND

A "nonbelieved memory" (NBM) is an autobiographical memory that is no longer believed to represent an actual event, despite a vivid recollection (Mazzoni et al., 2010).

Eight reasons for changing one's belief in the occurrence of an autobiographical event have been identified. The most common one is social feedback, whereby the veracity of the event is questioned by others (Scoboria et al., 2014).

OBJECTIVES

Examining the inter-individual differences between people who report NBMs and those who do not.

HYPOTHESES:

1. Suggestible people are more likely to have NBMs;
2. Suggestible people who report NBMs are more likely to have changed their belief following social feedback.

METHOD

Screened participants: N = 113

- 20 – 60 years ($M = 27.4$ years, $SD = 10.3$ years)
- 69 ♀

STEP 1

Participants completed the french version of the Gudjonson Compliance Scale (Gudjónsson, 1989) and the Multidimensional Iowa Suggestibility Scale (Kotov et al., 2004).

STEP 2

Answer to the screening question

→ NO → STOP

→ YES

NBM

1. Description
2. Age at the time of event
3. Reason(s) for withdrawing belief
4. Age at withdrawal
5. Evaluation of belief, recollection, plausibility
6. Ratings of phenomenological characteristics

BM

Points 1, 2, 5, 6

RESULTS

Frequency and general characteristics of NBMs

Frequency: 46%

Age at the time of event:

$M = 9.63$ $SD = 5.46$

Range = 3 – 22

Age at withdrawal:

$M = 16.7$ $SD = 6.78$

Range = 6 – 45

Reasons for withdrawing Belief:

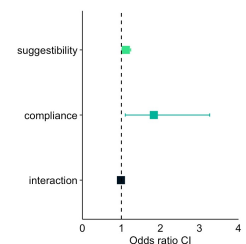
Social feedback: n = 32

Other: n = 21

Occurrence of NBMs

NBM		No NBM		Effects	Estimate	Std. Error	Z value	Pr(> z)
Sug. M(SD)	Com. M(SD)	Sug. M(SD)	Com. M(SD)					
49.40 (8.38)	8.62 (3.43)	47.80 (11.0)	7.93 (4.02)	Sug.	0.108	0.051	2.123	0.034
				Com.	0.605	0.273	2.212	0.027
				Interaction	-0.012	0.006	-2.134	0.033

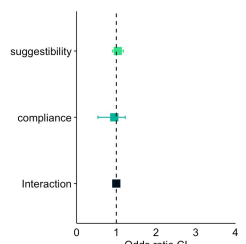
→ Suggestibility, compliance and their interaction predict whether an NBM is reported or not.



Withdrawal reasons

Feedback		Other		Effects	Estimate	Std. Error	Z value	Pr(> z)
Sug. M(SD)	Com. M(SD)	Sug. M(SD)	Com. M(SD)					
49.80 (8.89)	8.38 (3.20)	48.0 (8.34)	8.67 (4.03)	Sug.	0.036	0.063	0.582	0.561
				Com.	-0.052	0.159	-0.330	0.741
				Interaction	-0.001	0.004	-0.199	0.842

→ The levels of suggestibility and compliance do not predict the reasons for changing one's belief.



CONCLUSION

1. The results showed that people's level of suggestibility seems to play a role in the formation of NBMs.
2. A high level of compliance would also make people more likely to report this type of memory.
3. However, this study did not show that the reasons for a change in belief were related to people's level of suggestibility.

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