Metacognitive Therapy in Addictive Behaviours Research Group

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Metacognitive Therapy (MCT) is a recent development in understanding the causes of mental health problems and in treating them. Its conceptual foundation is the Self-Regulatory Executive Function (S-REF) model developed by Adrian Wells and Gerald Matthews (1994).

In this model Wells and Matthews argue that a common style of thinking across mental health problems leads to dysfunction. They propose that psychological disturbance is maintained by a combination of perseverative thinking styles (brooding and worry), maladaptive attentional routines, and dysfunctional behaviours that constitute a cognitive-attentional syndrome (CAS).

The CAS is derived from an individual’s set of metacognitive beliefs, which are activated in problematic situations and drive coping. Metacognitive beliefs refer to knowledge individuals hold about their internal states and about coping strategies that impact on them. In MCT it is necessary to remove the CAS by helping patients develop new ways of controlling their attention and relate differently to negative thoughts, as well as by modifying metacognitive beliefs.

Our research group is focusing on developing and testing metacognitive models and associated treatment protocols in addictive behaviours, particularly alcohol use disorders, nicotine dependence, problematic internet use and problem gambling. To date, a large proportion of our work has focused on interviews (profiling metacognitive factors), the development of psychometric measures (aimed at assessing metacognitive domains) and the testing of metacognitive models. We have also used prospective and experimental methodologies particularly in the investigation of craving, desire thinking and rumination in alcohol use disorders.
Since the formation of our research group in 2005 we have published 25 international peer reviewed journal articles and two book chapters. We have also presented over 30 international conference papers. Our research group centres on a strong international collaboration network across several institutions, including: Kingston University (Dr Ana Nikčević), the University of Manchester (Prof Adrian Wells), the University of Pavia (Dr Gabriele Caselli), the Royal Free Hospital (Dr Bruce Fernie), Studi Cognitivi (Dr Sandra Sassaroli), and Queensland University of Technology (Dr Dawn Proctor).

The following are our publications (book chapters and journal articles) by area of research:

**Desire thinking**


**Metacognition in alcohol use disorders**


Metacognition in nicotine dependence


**Metacognition in problematic Internet use**


**Metacognition in problem gambling**


**Rumination in alcohol use disorders**
