Psychophysiological, behavioural and experiential responses to evoked positive and negative emotion in people with eating disorders

Results:

This study used an amusing and sad film clip to evoke emotion responses in participants with anorexia nervosa and bulimia nervosa. Emotion response was measured via facial expression, subjective reports and skin conductance (SC) reactivity. Results showed differences in emotion responses between positive and negative affect and across the eating disorder groups. The anorexia nervosa group showed a general attenuation of positive affect but more of a dysregulated profile to negative stimuli with attenuated facial expression but subjective and physiological arousal similar to controls. Therefore, supporting the notion that negative expression is being inhibited. Generally, it was observed that the bulimia nervosa participants had a similar profile in emotion response to the control group, however they demonstrated an increase in SC reactivity to the sad film clip, compared to HC.

In conclusion, this study highlights the importance of using multiple measures of emotional responding in clinical samples as group differences may be observed with some response measures but not with others. This study supports models of eating disorders which propose emotion avoidance in anorexia nervosa (Schmidt & Treasure, 2006; Treasure et al, 2012) and dysregulation in bulimia nervosa (Cooper et al, 2006) as maintaining factors of the disorders.

Published Works:

Davies H, Schmidt U, Tchanturia K. An experimental assessment of emotion responding in anorexia and bulimia nervosa. (Submitted)


**Book Chapter:**

**Peer review publications:**

**Area(s) of Interest:**
Eating disorders, emotion processing, emotion expression

**Researchers' Contacts:**
Dr. Kate Tchanturia and Dr. Helen Davies
Eating Disorders Unit
Institute of Psychiatry
King’s College London
De Crespigny Park
London
SE5 8AF

T:0207 8480134/0250
F:0207 8480 182

Kate.tchanturia@kcl.ac.uk
Helen.davies@kcl.ac.uk