Rumination in Generalized Anxiety and Social Phobia: A Qualitative Systematic Review

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Abstract
Rumination has often been investigated in relation to the etiology and maintenance of major depression. Evidence now suggests that rumination is also associated with anxiety disorders. However, there are relatively few studies that examine ruminative response in clinical samples such as generalized anxiety disorder (GAD) or social phobia (SP). The goal of this article is to provide a comprehensive review of the studies analyzing the relations between rumination, generalized anxiety disorder and social phobia. A comprehensive search of the literature identified 37 studies that were included in this review. We searched the PsycArticles, PubMed, Sciencedirect and Web of Science databases, beginning with January 2000. We conclude that investigating the potential role of rumination in social phobia and generalized anxiety has implications for current cognitive models as well as in clinical practice.

Keywords
rumination, generalized anxiety disorder, social phobia, systematic review

Theoretical Perspectives on Rumination

Rumination is defined as “behavior and thoughts that focus one’s attention on one’s depressive symptoms and on the implications of these symptoms” (Nolen-Hoeksema, 1991). According to Response Style Theory (Nolen-Hoeksema, 1991) rumination is a cognitive process hallmarked by repetitive thinking and negative automatic thoughts. Theories of rumination

The Response style theory (Nolen-Hoeksema, 1991) defines rumination as repetitive and passive thinking about one’s symptoms of distress and the