

A direct comparison of the defense mechanisms of nondepressed people and depressed psychiatric inpatients.

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A direct comparison of the defense mechanisms of nondepressed people and depressed psychiatric inpatients

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Abstract

This report presents a direct comparison of defensive styles (as measured by the Defense Mechanisms Inventory [DMI]) in a sample of depressed psychiatric inpatients and samples of nondepressed male and female normative groups. Consistent with the “depressive realism” literature, nondepressed men and women were more likely than their depressed counterparts to bias their perceptions in an overly cheerful, optimistic direction. Counternormative sex differences were also found. Depressed men were more likely to use internalizing defenses and depressed women were more likely to use externalizing defenses than their respective nondepressed comparison groups. Overall, as has been speculated, there was a relationship within depressed subjects between depression severity and the amount of negatively biased self-perception.



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