



The Struggle Within: Taboo Obsessions In OCD and Their Relationship to Suicidality, Quality of Life, and Perceptions of Clinicians' Judgment

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Introduction

Obsessive-compulsive disorder (OCD) is defined as a disorder where people experience uncontrollable unwanted thoughts and engage in repetitive behaviors that interfere with daily life (Cervin et al., 2022). Conversations around obsessive-compulsive disorder often neglect to discuss the harmful effects taboo obsessions (**such as harm, violence, and sexual obsessions**) have on those affected by this disorder, which is why research on this topic is important. Several studies have shown that taboo obsessions in OCD have an increased link to suicidal ideations and behaviors (Cervin et al., 2022; Ching et al., 2017). This study aims to examine taboo obsessions in OCD and their relationship to suicidality, quality of life, and perceptions of clinicians' judgment.

Literature Review

- Cervin and colleagues' found that taboo obsessions in OCD have a greater association with suicidality when compared to other obsessive-compulsive disorder subtypes (Cervin et al., 2022).
- Steinberg and colleagues' results suggested that the participants were more likely to reject or feel hesitant toward those with contamination, sexual, and harm obsessions, compared to those with moral/religious obsessions (Steinberg et al., 2017).
- Jahangard and colleagues' found that those with OCD reported a lower quality of life and a higher level of anxiety and depression (Jahangard et al., 2018).

Hypothesis

- H1:** Individuals with OCD experiencing taboo thoughts have a higher risk of suicidality compared to those with OCD not experiencing taboo thoughts.
- H2:** As obsessive-compulsive disorder symptoms increase, quality of life scales will decrease.
- H3:** As taboo obsessions increase, perceptions of clinicians' judgment will increase.

Discussion

- Results indicate individuals with OCD who experience taboo thoughts have a higher risk of having suicidal thoughts or behaviors.
- Results suggest that individuals who have received a diagnosis of OCD tend to experience a lower quality of life compared to those who suspect they have OCD but haven't been formally diagnosed.
- Results suggested that those with OCD experiencing taboo thoughts have an increased fear of being judged negatively.

Limitations:

- This study included both diagnosed and non-diagnosed participants. If conducted again, only diagnosed participants would be included.
- Fear of Negative Evaluation Scale (FNE) did not measure perception of clinicians' judgment. If conducted again, the questions should include "clinician" or a different scale should be chosen.

Methodology

Participants:

- 125 participants (65 diagnosed OCD, 60 suspected OCD, $M_{Age} = 29.26$, $SD = 9.01$)
- Participants consisted of:
 - Four men (3.2%)
 - 112 women (89.6%)
 - Two transgender men (1.6%)
 - Seven nonbinary individuals (5.6%).

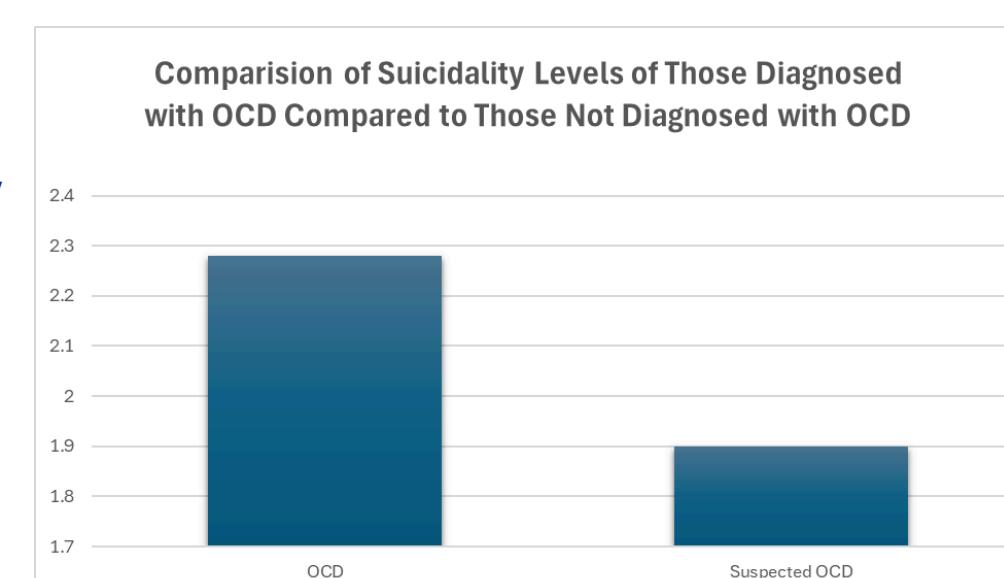
Design/Procedure:

- Participants' responses collected via Qualtrics
- Scales consisted of:
 - **Brief Obsessive-Compulsive Scale** measured OCD subtypes (Bejerot et al., 2014).
 - **The Columbia-Suicide Severity Rating Scale** measured risk of suicidality (Posner et al., 2011).
 - **The Quality of Life Scale** measured one's quality of life (Flanagan, 1978).
 - **Fear of Negative Evaluation Scale** measured fear of negative judgment (Watson and Friend, 1969).
 - This study used a correlational research design.

Results

- H1:** A significant correlation was found between those who experience taboo thoughts and suicidality, $r(115) = .246, p < .01$.
- H2:** A significant correlation was not found between obsessive disorder symptoms and decreased quality of life, $r(118) = -.140, p > .05$
 - However, when comparing quality of life scores, a significant correlation was found between being diagnosed with OCD and having a lower quality of life compared to those who only suspect they have OCD.
- H3:** A significant correlation was found between taboo obsessions and fear of negative judgment, however, the scale was not accurate in measuring for perception of clinicians' judgment, $r(118) = .369, p < .01$.

This bar graph shows a comparison between suicidality levels in those diagnosed with OCD ($M = 2.28$) and those who suspect they have OCD ($M = 1.91$).



References

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