

Abstract

A wealth of researches suggested that people with anxiety disorders had attentional biases towards threatening stimuli. Attentional Modification Program (AMP) was a newly emerging therapy that targeted on unconsciously shifting these attentional biases away from threat in the hope of reducing anxiety symptoms in the anxious individuals. Although promising results were obtained in AMP researches in the western counterparts, there were few researches in Hong Kong that studied the casual role of attentional bias in the maintenance of anxiety and the efficacy of AMP. Against this backdrop, the current research acted as a pilot study in Hong Kong, aiming to investigate the relationship between the attentional bias and the anxiety symptoms and the potential of developing AMP as an alternative treatment option for local people with anxiety disorders. In the current research, four adolescent participants, two with Obsessive-Compulsive Disorder and two with Social Anxiety Disorder, attended 8 sessions of AMP treatment in 4 weeks. Result indicated that although all participants showed significant droppings in their anxiety symptoms, as indicated by self-report measures and diagnostic interviews, it failed to establish a definite causal relationship between the attentional bias and the anxiety symptoms. However, conclusion that negated such causality could not be made due to the pilot nature and the limitations of the current research. No doubt that the results of the current research did give grounds for further investigations on attentional biases and its role in anxiety disorders, but in order to develop AMP into an effective and efficacious treatment, more scientific studies should be conducted in the future.