

Abstract

A considerable number of research has studied the attentional biases towards negative stimuli in depression and dysphoria. It is suggested that unlike anxiety, the attentional biases in depression and dysphoria are displayed in later stage attentional processing, rather than early stage attentional processing. However, when the change occurs is unclear. Moreover, previous findings were unable to isolate the effect of depression or dysphoria from that of anxiety, as the correlation between the two is high. In this eye-tracking study, continuous eye fixations, and hence time course of attention were studied. Depressed mood-induction was used to avoid the interference of anxiety.

Although main effect for condition was not found, participants with induced depressed mood looked at the Chinese negative-valence stimuli more than did the control group, suggesting possible attentional biases. The group differences emerged in 600-800 ms. This finding suggests that the attentional biases in dysphoria begin to manifest from around 600-800 ms. Implications and future research were discussed.

Keywords: attention, attentional biases, dysphoria, eye-tracking, mood-induction