



The Role of Metacognition in the Maintenance of Reassurance-Seeking Behaviour in Obsessive-Compulsive Disorder

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BACKGROUND

- Excessive reassurance seeking (ERS) is the repeated solicitation of safety-related information regarding potential threats, despite having already received this information.
- ERS has been conceptualized as a form of compulsive checking due to its functional similarities with checking (e.g., both strategies are used to reduce feelings of anxiety or distress).
- Research has found deficits in memory confidence to be an important maintenance factor for compulsive checking (e.g., prolonging checking behaviour). As a result, checking is thought to be sustained via a “self-perpetuating” cognitive mechanism.
- Deficits in memory confidence and other aspects of metacognition have not been explored as maintenance factors for ERS, despite its functional similarity to compulsive checking.

AIMS

- Determine whether specific domains of metacognition (e.g., beliefs about memory) are predictive of ERS severity, as measured by its frequency and duration.
- Explore whether reassurance-seeking, like checking, is maintained by a self-perpetuating cognitive mechanism. Specifically, assess whether metacognition and obsessive-compulsive beliefs predict reassurance seeking frequency and duration.
- Determine whether metacognition has different relationships with two broad categories of ERS: interpersonal ERS (e.g., asking a loved one for reassurance) and online ERS (e.g., searching for information about something on Google).

SELECTED REFERENCES

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METHOD

PARTICIPANTS

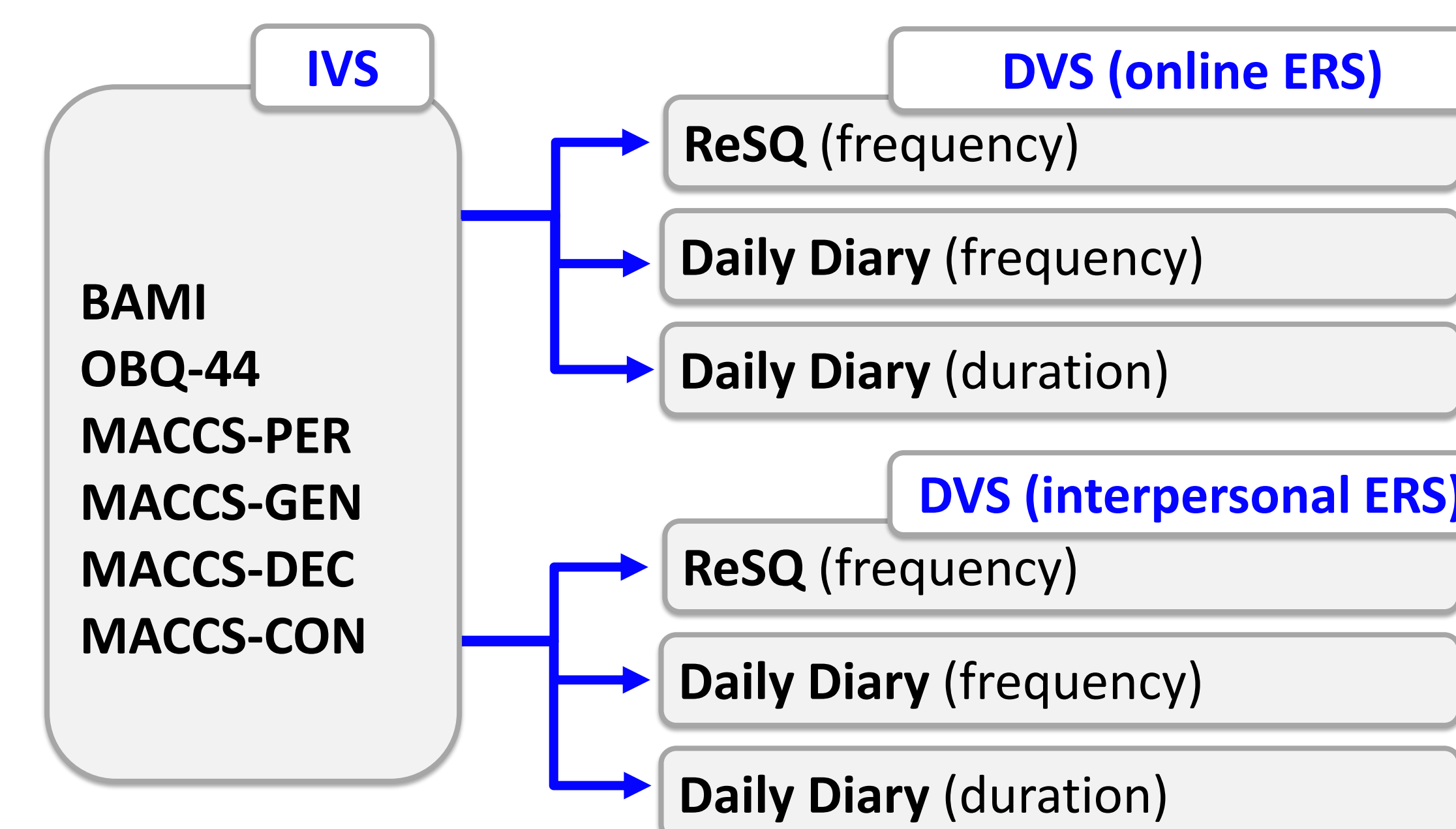
- 21 participants (76% female) participated in the study; one was excluded.

MEASURES

- Metacognition
 - Beliefs about Memory Inventory (BAMI)
 - Metamemory and Cognitive Confidence Scale, composed of four subscales assessing cognitive perfectionism (MACCS-PER); confidence in general memory (MACCS-GEN), decision-making abilities (MACCS-DEC), and concentration (MACCS-CON).
- OCD symptomology
 - Obsessive Beliefs Questionnaire (OBQ-44)
- ERS Severity
 - Reassurance-Seeking Questionnaire (ReSQ), adapted. Assessed interpersonal and online ERS frequency, but not duration.
 - Daily Diary Survey**, completed over 3 or 5 days. Assessed the duration and frequency of interpersonal and online reassurance-seeking, as well as confidence in memory for the most recent reassurance received, if applicable.

ANALYSES

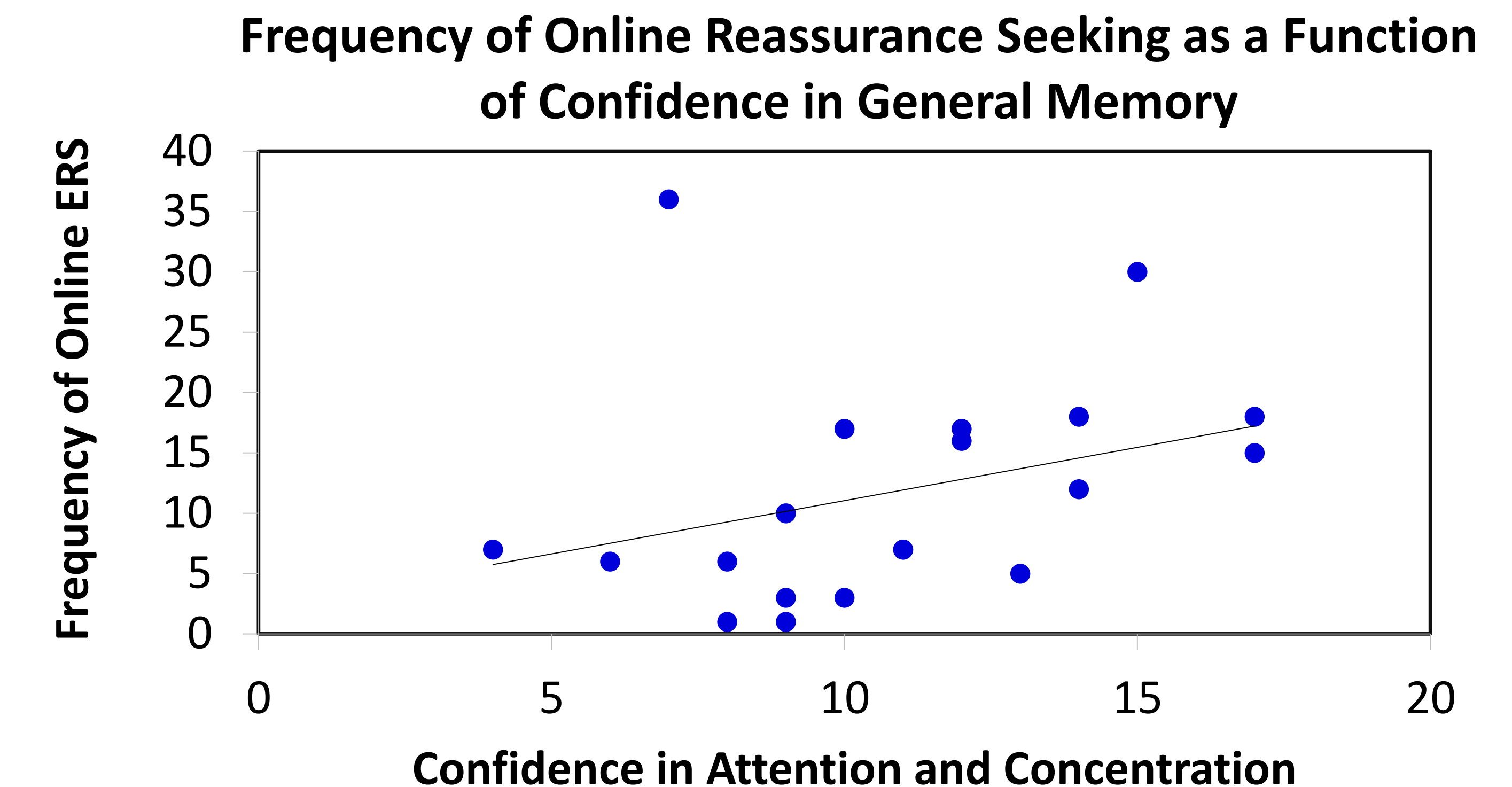
Multivariate regression analyses were conducted to predict severity of online and interpersonal ERS from metacognition and obsessive beliefs (Aim 1).



Multivariate regression analyses were also used to predict metacognition from reassurance-seeking frequency and duration (Aim 2).

- Predictor variables: frequency and duration of reassurance-seeking.
- Criterion variables: metacognition measures: BAMI, MACCS, and daily diary confidence in memory scores.

SELECTED SIGNIFICANT RESULTS



Criterion	R ²	Predictors	β	t
ReSQ Online (Frequency of Online ERS)	0.85	BAMI	-0.64**	-3.15
		MACCS-DEC	0.45	1.27
		MACCS-CON	1.06**	3.31
		MACCS-GEN	-0.16	-1.17
		MACCS-PER	-1.76***	-4.98
		OBQ-44	0.27***	6.880

*** $p < .001$
** $p < .01$
* $p < .05$

Criterion	Predictors	β	t	R ²
MACCS-GEN	ReSQ Online	0.88*	2.71	0.26
	Daily Dairy Online Duration	-0.11	-0.62	
OBQ-44	ReSQ Online	3.04**	3.94	0.45
	Daily Diary Online Duration	-0.42	-1.02	

DISCUSSION

- Aim 1**
 - In line with hypotheses: Confidence in attention/concentration and obsessive beliefs predicted higher online reassurance-seeking frequency as measured by the ReSQ.
 - Contrary to hypotheses: Cognitive perfectionism and maladaptive beliefs about memory predicted lower online reassurance-seeking frequency as measured by the ReSQ. Confidence in attention/concentration was the only significant predictor of interpersonal ERS severity (duration, but not frequency).
- Aim 2**
 - Contrary to hypotheses: No measures of interpersonal or online reassurance-seeking severity predicted obsessive beliefs or any measures of metacognition, providing no support for the hypothesis that reassurance-seeking may be self-perpetuated in a manner similar to checking.
- Aim 3**
 - Online reassurance seeking may have stronger relationships with metacognition domains than interpersonal reassurance seeking.

