

Effects of Death Anxiety on Covid-19 Health-Related Prosocial Behavior Cooperation

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Background

- How the exposure to mass deaths from COVID-19 impacted people's willingness to cooperate and help each other
- Approached as a collective action problem
- Cooperation with CDC and government mandates defined as a prosocial behavior
- Terror Management Theory
- Help determine if behavioral vaccine is possible to solve the public health crisis

Hypotheses

- H1: Participants exposed to the COVID-19 related mortality salience stimulus would be the most willing to participate in health-related prosocial behaviors.
- H2: Participants exposed to the COVID-19 related mortality salience stimulus would be more willing to comply with more restrictive government mandates.
- H3: Participants exposed to the general mortality salience stimulus would be more willing to participate in health-related prosocial behaviors and more willing to comply with more restrictive government mandates than the control group, but less willing than the COVID-19 mortality salience group.

Methods

Participants

- N = 121
- Mechanical Turk

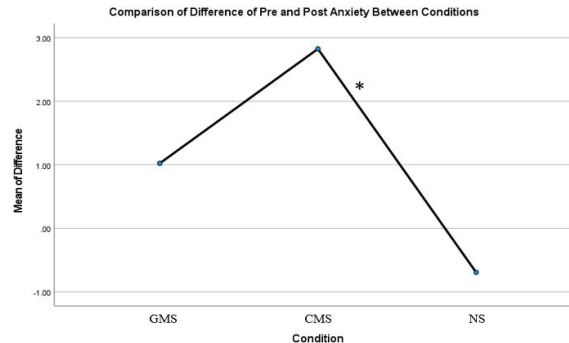
Death Anxiety Induction

- Random assignment to one of three conditions:
 - General Mortality Salience (GMS),
 - Covid-19 Mortality Salience (CMS), or
 - Neutral Stimulus (NS)
- Watched a video of news clips for each condition

Surveys

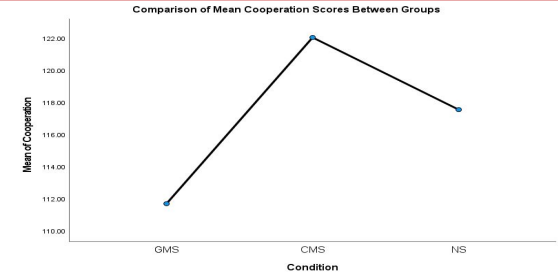
- GAD-7 for anxiety
- DAS for death anxiety
- Covid-19 Recommendations and Regulations Cooperation Survey for willingness to cooperate.

Results



Results

- Significant differences between CMS and NS on difference between pre and post anxiety
- No significant differences between groups for death anxiety, post-anxiety, or cooperation
- Data showed results trending toward the hypothesized relationship between CMS, death anxiety, and cooperation



Conclusions

- Death anxiety as produced by exposure to Covid-19 stimuli may have an effect on willingness to cooperate and engage in health-related prosocial behaviors
- Using prevention of death or reminding people of the potential for death if guidelines and recommendations are not followed may backfire
- Reducing death anxiety and focusing on getting back to normalcy may be more effective strategy to get collective cooperation