

Seminar

Directed forgetting in human and non-human animals: Implications for clinical psychology

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Date: 31 March 2017 (Friday)
Time: 12:00 nn – 1:30 pm (Reception with light lunch starts at 11:45 am. To facilitate the order of lunch, please register through email yfung2222@cityu.edu.hk.)
Venue: B4701, Academic 1, City University of Hong Kong
Language: English

Abstract

Mood-congruent memory bias is a common feature of both anxiety and depression among humans. Intentional forgetting (that is, the voluntary forgetting of material after it has been encoded) is related to memory bias. The directed forgetting paradigm has been commonly used in the laboratory to investigate intentional forgetting. In this presentation, I will discuss the findings of an ongoing study of the role of positive and negative memory biases in anxiety and depression. The item-method directed forgetting paradigm was used to measure intentional forgetting of positive-valence, negative-valence, and neutral-valence words among 142 adolescents (age range = 12.25 years to 17.70 years; mean age = 14.23 years; SD = 1.25 years). It was found that participants with a higher level of anxiety tended to exhibit more negative memory bias (i.e., exhibited greater difficulty in forgetting negative stimuli). However, more severe depressive symptoms were related to less negative memory bias, probably owing to the avoidance tendency of depressive individuals. Furthermore, individuals with more severe depressive symptoms tended to assign a negative meaning to neutral words (i.e., exhibited a negative interpretation bias). Whether memory bias and interpretation bias may also be found among non-human animals, and how non-human animal studies can contribute to an understanding of the psychopathology of humans will be discussed in this presentation.

Biography



Prof. Samuel Ho is the Associate Provost (Institutional Initiatives) and a Professor of Psychology at the City University of Hong Kong. As a registered clinical psychologist, his research interest is in psychopathology, especially etiology of anxiety and depression. Currently, Prof Ho is conducting a series of experiments to examine the relative roles of positive and negative cognitive processing styles in anxiety and depression. He is one of the representative figures of positive psychology in Asia, and the Executive Council member of the Clinical Division of the International Positive Psychology Association.

**** ALL ARE WELCOME ****