

Depression and Paranoia: Does Today's Depression Impact Tomorrow's Paranoia or Vice Versa?

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Symptoms of depression and paranoia have been known to be related, but the direction of this relationship remains unclear. We examined the direction of the longitudinal relationship between depression and paranoia using the Patient Health Questionnaire-9 and the paranoia dimension of the Community Assessment of Psychic experiences respectively in a community sample of Indonesians ($N = 480$). Participants completed a baseline (followed by seven daily) surveys. Multilevel modeling was conducted using lme4 in R. Depression predicted subsequent paranoid symptoms for up to three days (e.g. day 1, $t(84.24) = 4.28$, $p < 0.001$, $d = 0.93$) and reverse effects apply for up to two days (e.g. day 2, $t(67.75) = 3.43$, $p = 0.00102$, $d = 0.83$). This indicates that depressive symptoms on a given day may impact the level of paranoid symptoms for up to three days, and the reverse relationship is valid for up to two preceding days. Depression and paranoid symptoms seem to reciprocally impact each other's persistence in an individual's life. A plausible implication is that when dealing with people who exhibit depressive and paranoid symptoms, clinicians can focus on reducing either one, and the other may follow.

Keywords: psychosis, depression, paranoia, schizophrenia
Word Count: 200 out of 200 words