

Illuminating mechanisms of repetitive thinking

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The ability to engage in mental time travel—to delve back into past events or imagine future outcomes—is a unique and central part of the human experience. And yet this very ability can have detrimental consequences for both physical and mental well-being when it becomes repetitive and uncontrolled.

A [special series of articles](#) in the July 2015 issue of *Clinical Psychological Science* (CPS) investigates this kind of repetitive thinking, exploring the core [psychological processes](#) that underlie maladaptive thought processes like worry and rumination. The series highlights

cutting-edge research and methodology with the aim of advancing our understanding of the processes that contribute to [mental health](#) and illness.

"Our interest (as a journal) in repetitive thinking is in the role it may play in clinical dysfunction but also in mental health and physical health more generally. Apart from the role of repetitive thinking in clinical dysfunction, such thinking plays a pervasive role in everyday life and more broadly is central to the human condition," [writes CPS Editor Alan Kazdin](#) in his introduction. "This series is rich in the facets of repetitive thinking that are discussed and illustrated, including the role of rumination in dysfunction and therapeutic change."

According to special series guest editors Rudi De Raedt, Paula Hertel, and Edward Watkins, the articles collectively provide clear evidence for the advantages of taking a procedural, transdiagnostic approach to understanding repetitive thinking and other cognitive phenomena.

"Conceptualizing disorders with respect to converging patterns could stimulate the development of a new generation of interventions focused on changing the processes of disordered thought and affect," [De Raedt, Hertel, and Watkins write](#) in their introduction to the special series.

"Soon gone are the days of believing that clinical psychology can advance merely by describing people's thoughts and labeling them according to diagnostic criteria," the guest editors conclude.

Provided by Association for Psychological Science

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