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AN EXPLORATORY STUDY ON METACOGNITION, WORRY AND ANXIOUS SYMPTOMS IN CHILDREN

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The Self-Regulatory Executive Function model proposed by Wells and Mathews suggests that metacognition has a role in maintaining worry or rumination, exacerbating anxious symptoms in adults suffering from emotional disorders. To date, scientific literature on metacognition and anxiety in children is still limited. Nonetheless, studies on worry and metacognition in children affected by emotional disorders could help in determining whether the metacognitive model can be applied to children. The main purpose of this study was to evaluate cognitive processes (worry and rumination) and metacognitive beliefs in children with different subtypes of anxious symptoms. Through an online survey, the Penn State Worry Questionnaire for Children, the Screen for child Anxiety Related Emotional Disorders, the Metacognitions Questionnaire for Children, and Children's Depression Inventory were administered to 87 children (58.6% female) aged 8-14 years and to their parents. Results indicated that metacognitive beliefs and process metacognitions were significantly associated with anxiety. Therefore, metacognitions might play a significant role in children anxiety and we believe that tailored treatments based on metacognition should be developed for anxious children.