

Author's Accepted Manuscript

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PII: S0165-1781(17)30185-3
DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.psychres.2017.07.012>
Reference: PSY10646

To appear in: *Psychiatry Research*

Received date: 2 February 2017
Revised date: 1 June 2017
Accepted date: 4 July 2017

Cite this article as: Lillian Reuman, Ryan J. Jacoby, Shannon M. Blakey, Bradley C. Riemann, Rachel C. Leonard and Jonathan S. Abramowitz, Predictors of Illness Anxiety Symptoms in Patients with Obsessive Compulsive Disorder *Psychiatry Research*, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.psychres.2017.07.012>

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Predictors of Illness Anxiety Symptoms in Patients with Obsessive Compulsive Disorder

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Abstract

Illness anxiety and OCD symptoms appear to overlap in their presentation as well as in other conceptually important ways (e.g., dysfunctional cognitions). Little research, however, has directly examined these putative relationships. The present study examined the extent to which illness anxiety symptoms were associated with OCD symptom dimensions and relevant cognitive factors in a large treatment-seeking sample of patients with OCD. Patients completed a battery of self-report measures of OCD and health anxiety symptoms and related cognitive biases. Results from regression analyses indicated that illness anxiety symptoms were associated with harm obsessions and checking rituals, as well as with the tendency to overestimate threat and responsibility for harm. Illness anxiety was not associated with perfectionism. Conceptual and clinical implications of these findings are discussed.

Keywords: *OCD, illness anxiety, hypochondriasis, anxiety sensitivity*

1.) Introduction

Illness anxiety entails a preoccupation with the unsubstantiated belief that one has, or is imminently developing, a serious medical condition (Taylor and Asmundson,

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