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Relationships between Perceived Emotional Intelligence, Aggression, and Impulsivity in a Population-Based Adult Sample

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Abstract

A diminished capacity to reason about one's own or others' mood states (part of emotional intelligence, EI) may impair one's ability to respond to threat or frustration, leading to aggression and/or impulsivity. In this study, 1544 adult subjects completed the Trait-Meta-Mood Scale (TMMS), an assessment of perceived EI, in order to examine how attention to emotions, clarity of emotions, and repair of emotions were associated with aggression and impulsivity. Correlations among the TMMS subscales of Attention, Clarity, and Repair were all significant. Clarity moderated the relationship between Attention and Repair such that Attention correlated with Repair only at higher levels of Clarity. Aggression and Impulsivity were both associated with all three dimensions of perceived EI; however, Repair was associated more strongly with Aggression than Impulsivity, whereas the reverse was true for Clarity. Finally, a subsample of participants self-identified as having "anger problems" had lower TMMS scores for Clarity and Repair compared to "non-anger problem" participants. Adding aggression and impulsivity to the model eliminated these group differences. Results suggest that Clarity and Repair may be the most important aspect of perceived EI.

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