Clare E. McGuiness, Ian Zajac, Deborah Turnbull, Carlene Wilson

Modelling health behaviour: the contribution of health thinking style
Poster presented at the 10th Florey International Postgraduate Research Conference, 2016

Copyright the authors

PERMISSIONS

See lead author's email 24 November 2016

24 November 2016

http://hdl.handle.net/2440/102759
Modelling health behaviour
THE CONTRIBUTION OF HEALTH THINKING STYLE

CLARE E. McGUINESS · IAN ZAJAC · DEBORAH TURNBULL · CARLENE WILSON

It is well established that people have different thinking styles: preferences for the use of rational processes (deliberative, effortful) and intuitive processes (rapid, associative) in making decisions and guiding behaviour.

We wanted to find out whether people alter their thinking style for different domains of life, and we used the health domain as our focus. We asked:

Does health thinking style predict health behaviour better than general thinking style?

We modified a measure of general thinking style to relate to health matters. A sample of 992 adults (54.1% female; mean age 46.5) provided, in an online survey:

- demographics
- health importance rating
- general thinking style
- health thinking style
- self-reported health behaviour.

We ran hierarchical regressions to assess the incremental validity of health thinking style for eight behaviours. Health rationality and intuition predicted variance in some behaviours at comparable levels to known demographic predictors.

HEALTH THINKING STYLE PREDICTED UNIQUE VARIANCE IN...

**CREATING THE HEALTH THINKING STYLE SCALE**

Health thinking style: preferences for using rational and intuitive processes when thinking about health.

**Intuition item**: I trust my initial feelings about people

**Rationality item**: I enjoy problems that require hard thinking

**Health intuition**: I trust my initial feelings about health matters

**Health rationality**: When a decision may affect my health, I think hard about it


Figure note: Only significant predictors shown. At step 3, neither general nor health thinking style predicted statistically significant variance in smoking, physical activity, mammogram, PAP test, or digital rectal examination.

HEALTH THINKING STYLE PREDICTED UNIQUE VARIANCE IN...

- PAP smear participation
- Diet quality
- Home stool test participation

- Health rationality had incremental validity for prediction of three behaviours; health intuition showed incremental validity for predicting one behaviour.

Our new health thinking style variables, health rationality and health intuition, are potentially useful for understanding and promoting health behaviour.