

Validating Two New Measures of Fear of Emotions with Older Adolescents: The Modified Affective Control Scale for Adolescents (MACS-A) and Its Short Form (MACSA-16)

Ethics Approval: 2014/183

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Research Completed: June 2015

Aim of Current Research

The Fear of Emotions has been linked with the development and maintenance of various mental disorders. Furthermore, it has been found that adolescents experience emotions more intensely than other age groups. Therefore, studying the Fear of Emotions experienced by adolescents is highly valuable. However, there are currently no established measures for assessing the Fear of Emotions in adolescents. This study thus primarily aimed to examine if two newly-developed measures for assessing Fear of Emotions in adolescents are valid and reliable. Designing self-report measures for adolescents is important because the reports from others (e.g., teachers, parents) may not be as accurate, and measures designed for other age groups are not suitable for adolescents.

Method

There were a total of 198 participants in this study, aged 18 and 19 years old, who completed four scales in two sessions, spaced 1 to 2 weeks apart. To control for order effects, the participants were randomly assigned to four different orders of the scales.

The scales they were asked to complete were as follows:

1. **Affective Control Scale (ACS):** the original 42-item scale that has been well-established in assessing Fear of Emotions in adults
2. **Modified Affective Control Scale for Adolescents (MACS-A):** a modified version of the ACS, with 41 items, made suitable for assessing Fear of Emotions in adolescents
3. **Modified Affective Control Scale for Adolescents – Short Form (MACSA-16):** a shortened version of the scale, containing 16 items, for measuring Fear of Emotions in adolescents
4. **Difficulties in Emotion Regulation Scale (DERS):** the only established scale that measures multiple facets of emotion dysregulation in adults and adolescents, with 36 items

Findings of the Research

The results of this study provide strong evidence for the high internal consistencies and test-retest reliabilities for the MACS-A and MACSA-16. Both measures also demonstrated high concurrent validity when tested against the adult ACS—an original version of these scales—and the DERS—a scale measuring a construct that is related to the MACS-A and MACSA-16.

All in all, the current study found that the MACS-A and MACSA-16 are highly robust measures for assessing Fear of Emotions in older adolescents.

The results suggest that the MACS-A and MACSA-16 may be suitable for use in clinical settings since they meet the advocated levels of internal consistencies necessary for an instrument's use in such settings. In particular, the MACSA-16 may be suitable for such purposes due to its short form, making its administration in busy treatment settings practical. The short form may also be highly useful in research settings where multiple scales are used in the study, such as the current one. Short versions tend to improve test acceptability and completion, especially by adolescents with shorter attention spans.