

Abstract

Background: The current study aims at investigating the relationship between resilience, coping strategies and depressive disorder, using healthy adult controls as comparison.

Depression has become a major health concern worldwide and is prevalent in Hong Kong.

While life stressors could precipitate a depressive episode in some individuals, others could cope with daily stress with little disruption. Based on such observation, there is a recent shift in psychiatric research to focus on determining personal strengths that facilitate individual differences in response to adversities instead of identifying risk factors. The term 'Resilience' is a dynamic process and an important psychological construct in positive psychology.

Resilient individuals utilize positive adaptation to stress, which involves the use of adaptive coping strategies.

Methods: In this cross-sectional case-controlled study, 105 individuals with Major Depressive Disorder in the past six months were recruited from the Kowloon Hospital Psychiatric Unit.

105 matched healthy adult controls were also recruited for the purpose of comparison.

Resilience, depressive symptoms, life events of the participants and stress-coping styles were investigated using the Chinese version of the 10 items-Connor-Davidson Resilience Scale (10-CD-RISC), Chinese version of Beck Depressive Inventory- second edition (BDI-II), Chinese version of Social Readjustment Rating Scale (SRRS) and Chinese version of Brief COPE Inventory respectively. The case (Major Depressive Disorder) group was subdivided into four groups, i.e. single episode and symptomatic, single episode in remission, recurrent depressive episode and symptomatic, and recurrent depressive episode in remission, with their levels of resilience compared with the control group. The differences in the level of resilience, stress and coping strategies were also compared between the case and the control groups.

Results: The level of resilience was significantly lower in individuals with Major Depressive Disorder compared with the healthy adult controls. The level of resilience remained low following remission from a depressive episode, and being the lowest in those with recurrent depression when compared with the control group. Resilience was found to be positively correlated with adaptive coping styles and negatively correlated with depressive symptoms, stress and maladaptive coping styles. Logistic regression model showed that resilience and adaptive coping styles were negative predictors of Major Depressive Disorder, suggesting their possible roles as protective factors against Major Depressive Disorder.

Conclusion: The finding of this study suggested there may be 'strength-deficits' in patients with major depressive disorder. Interventions such as resilience and stress-coping training could be of potential benefits in Chinese adults with Major Depressive Disorder.

Keywords: resilience, coping, major depressive disorder, stress, life events, case control, Chinese, positive psychology