

The Defensive Characteristics of Negative Emotional Information Processing of Avoidant Attachment

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Abstract

Accurate processing of emotional information plays an important role in the management of interpersonal relationship and social function. Insecure attachment style effects the process of threaten related information. Individuals with avoidant pattern of attachment are assumed to repress threaten-related signals. They are assumed to have one internal working model associated with anxiety, operating out of awareness at early, automatic stages of information processing, and another positive model operating at later, cognitively controlled stages of processing. This paper discussed the defensive characteristics of negative emotion processing of avoidant attachment. Automatic vigilance followed by effortful inhibition as a cognitive defense for avoidant attachment to processing the threaten-related signals, which is expressed in a specific dual-process model of avoidant defenses included vigilance in early automatic process and avoidance in later controlled process. The evidences from various behavioral experimental paradigms included emoticon mimicry task, morph task, perceptual threshold task, as well as emotional cueing task provided support for the point of view that attachment avoidant individuals have the capacity to detect the threaten related information in certain circumstance in the early stage of information processing. This characteristic was also proved by the evidences from event-related potentials (ERP) components, which are mainly reflected in more strong amplitude in attention vigilance related components (N1, P2) and early components related to visual features-based emotion processing when presented negative emotion information in attachment avoidant individuals. However, individuals with avoidant attachment style processed negative emotion with attention inhibition at the cognitively controlled level of processing. The avoidant individual' tendency to "smiling" in response to the angry face at the controlled level was interpreted as a repression of their earlier, automatically evoked negative emotional reaction. Coincidentally, consistent with the proposal that avoidant individuals limit attention to potentially distressing information, attachment avoidance was associated with reductions in emotional Stroop (ES) interference for threatening related stimulus. These individuals exhibited limited cognitive resources which were devoted in this phase. The evidences from functional magnetic resonance imaging showed that during the processing of negative emotion, these individuals with attachment avoidant exhibited more strong activities in brain region in charge of advanced cognitive and control function, such as the right hemisphere

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superior frontal gyms (rSFG), the dorsolateral prefrontal cortex (DLPFC), the orbital frontal cortex (OFC) and so on. It can be explained that effectively avoiding processing threaten related information is based on the heightened state of vigilance for attachment avoidance. The defense strategy of attachment avoidance was considered as a secondary strategy with cognitive effort to sustain in later stage of emotion information processing. This characteristic of cognitive resource consumption made the strategy ineffective when the cognitive resource deficit. Future studies can further explore the causal basis for the relationship between avoidant attachment and vigilance-inhibition attention pattern, pay attention to the impact of defensive emotional processing on individual health and the maintain of intimate relationship, explore the neural mechanism and effectiveness of the deactivation strategy and further study the application of avoid defense in clinical treatment to provide new inspiration for the treatment of attachment disorder and related clinical strategies.

Keywords

Avoidant Attachment Style, Emotion Process, Defensive Exclusion, Dual-Process Model, Noneffective Defence

回避型依恋者对消极情绪信息防御性加工特征

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摘要

准确加工情绪信息在人际关系管理及一般社会功能上起重要作用。不安全依恋风格影响个体的情绪加工偏向。回避型依恋者抑制消极刺激的加工, 并且被看做拥有早期无意识的焦虑自我模型以及晚期控制的积极自我模型。本文主要探讨回避型依恋者加工消极情绪信息的防御性排斥特征, 具体表现为一种早期警觉和晚期抑制的双重加工模型。行为证据证明了回避型依恋者在早期自动化加工阶段表现出同依恋焦虑者类似的对威胁相关信息的警觉探测。ERP成分也体现了回避者早期警觉的特征, 表现在N1、P2等注意警觉相关成分以及C1、P1等基于粗略视觉特征的视觉情绪刺激加工相关的早成分更为强烈的波幅上。在晚期加工阶段这类个体则表现出对消极情绪的回避抑制加工, 在表情模仿任务中出现“反转的微笑”以及stroop任务中更少的干扰效应证明其在晚期加工阶段的抑制加工特征。神经层面表现为回避型个体在认知控制脑区如背外侧前额叶、眶额皮层等脑区的激活。回避者对负性情绪的高度警觉是成功回避的前提, 而这一策略在个体认知资源不足时出现失效。未来研究可进一步探讨回避型依恋与警觉-抑制注意模式的因果基础; 关注防御性情绪信息加工对个体健康以及关系维持的影响及后果; 深入考察去激活策略功能的有效性及其神经机制; 深化回避防御在临床治疗上的应用, 进一步为治疗依恋混乱相关的临床策略提供新的启示。

关键词

回避型依恋, 情绪加工, 防御性排斥, 双加工模型, 防御失效

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1. 引言

心理防御是 Bowlby (1982)所提出的依恋理论的基本概念之一。根据依恋理论,在威胁情境下向重要他人寻求亲近是个体与生俱来的依恋行为系统,这一系统包含着一系列心理机制与人类动机。理解回避型依恋个体心理防御的运行及实质在依恋理论中所扮演的角色是当代依恋研究者长期关注争议的问题(Marks & Vicary, 2015)。这一类个体以抑制亲近寻求,试图自主控制处理压力为特征,主要采用去激活策略来忽略对威胁信息的编码,抑制激活依恋系统和消极自我表征,试图以否认压力的形式来维持自我信赖与积极自我表征(Mikulincer & Shaver, 2007)。回避型依恋者的防御策略调节情绪信息加工过程并导致情绪信息加工偏差,这一偏差被看做是不安全依恋风格破坏亲密关系的核心方式(Simpson & Rholes, 2012),而从进化论的角度,准确的情绪加工具有重要的生物适应意义(Van Kleef, 2010)。消极情绪传达着与拒绝相关的不满或沮丧,对个体而言,不仅意味着一种威胁信号,同时提醒着个体与过去消极的依恋经验相关的痛苦情绪,诱发激活个体的依恋系统。本文总结了回避型依恋者对消极情绪信息加工的防御特征及其运行机制,关注这一防御性情绪加工方式对回避者亲密关系质量和个体长期的心理健康问题的影响,并在此基础上对未来研究提出展望。

2. 去激活策略与消极情绪信息加工

威胁情境激活个体对依恋对象的亲近寻求或维持,而是否通过亲近支持寻求获得安全感很大程度上取决于对依恋对象可得性的评估(Mikulincer & Shaver, 2003)。这种依恋风格上的变异通常被描述为两种依恋维度:依恋焦虑与依恋回避(Fraley & Waller, 1998)。回避型依恋作为一种典型的非安全依恋风格,对应着高回避低焦虑,通过抑制对信息加工的注意、编码以及提取的去激活策略,避免在威胁情境中激活依恋系统(Mikulincer & Shaver, 2003)。Bowlby 使用防御性排斥(defensive exclusion)这一术语来阐释这一阻止痛苦信息进入个体意识层面的机制。通过停滞或转移的信息加工,阻断可能激活依恋系统的信息加工通路,保护回避型依恋者免于遭受因对痛苦的依恋相关的信息进行有意识加工而引发的心理痛苦(Ein-Dor, Shaver, & Mikulincer, 2011)。这一策略能够防止回避者再次卷入消极的依恋经验以及相应的沮丧情绪中,保护个体免于再次经历类似的压力情境,避免激活消极依恋表征从而威胁到回避者脆弱的自我。

作为去激活策略运行的最关键的部分,回避型依恋者对消极情绪信息的注意抑制特征已经得到广泛证实(Gillath, Giesbrecht, & Shaver, 2009)。Fraley 等人(2006)报告了回避者在注意编码阶段的抑制加工不受动机因素的影响,防御性排斥主要反映了认知因素如何作用于回避者的消极情绪加工过程。

3. 警觉 - 回避的双加工模式

基于已有的研究发现(Fraley et al., 2000; Niedenthal et al., 2002),防御性排斥并非是一个单通道加工,而是一个包含对威胁早期警觉与晚期注意解离回避的双重加工模型(Derakshan, Eysenck, & Myers, 2007; Chun et al., 2015)。回避者这种警觉回避的注意模式符合不同加工阶段两个相互矛盾的自我模型的作用假设(Bartholomew, 1990),二者运行于信息加工的不同阶段(Sonnby-Borgström, & Jönsson, 2004)。早期阶段的注意警觉性可能反映了一种焦虑的自我模型(Bartholomew, 1990)。这一模型与消极情绪和自我脆弱感相关,使回避者在信息加工早期快速鉴别潜在威胁,主要在无意识条件下运行。而在晚期意识加工阶段则

受回避模型的调节抑制,这一模型与积极自我相关,促使回避者抑制对威胁相关情绪信息的加工,从而保持着自我依赖和积极的自我印象。

3.1. 早期自动化加工阶段的注意警觉

高度的警觉是成功回避负性信息的一个前提(Calvo & Eysenck, 2000),Sonnby-Borgström和同事(2004)发现尽管回避者在共情量表上得分更低,但在自动化加工水平表现出与非回避者相似的对生气面孔的表情模仿反应,这一结果显示回避型个体的依恋系统对焦虑相关信息的敏感性并没有完全消失,而在无意识条件下运行。Niedenthal与同事(2002)发现了回避型依恋者在渐变任务(morph task)中比安全型更晚知觉到愤怒表情的变化,意味着回避者对外界情绪信息的警觉关注占据了认知资源,而对情绪面孔的变化不太敏感,显示出在自动的初级加工阶段对负性情绪信息的警觉性。Maier等人(2005)采用知觉阈限任务(perceptual threshold task)考察个体对社会性情绪信息的识别,发现回避型依恋者在识别以愤怒为代表的负性情绪面孔阈限值低,表现出一种警觉探测。一项研究采用情绪线索任务(Emotional cueing task),在刺激呈现时间 100 ms 时,轻蔑表情无效提示条件下回避者反应时显著长于安全组被试,表现出对威胁相关表情的注意警觉(Chun et al., 2015)。

更多的研究者使用事件相关电位(ERP)技术探讨回避者早期警觉加工的电生理证据。Fraedrich等人(2010)使用情绪 oddball 实验范式考察了回避型依恋母亲与安全型依恋母亲的面孔情绪加工特征,发现回避型母亲在观看婴儿情绪面孔图片时相比安全型母亲出现了更负的 N170 成分。N170 是一种面孔敏感的特异性成分(Halit et al., 2004),更负的 N170 成分反映了对面孔的注意警觉,这一过程激活了更多的信息加工资源(Minsi zheng, 2015),显示出回避型母亲对婴儿情绪面孔更早的觉察。Zhang等人(2008)采用向后掩蔽范式发现无论阈上还是阈下呈现刺激,回避型个体对情绪面孔出现了更少的 N2 波幅以及更大的 P2 波幅。N2 波幅反映了对面孔的结构编码,而 P2 波幅则受对面孔情绪内容感知的调节(Eimer & Holmes 2007),这一结果可解释为更高的情绪唤醒减弱了面孔的结构加工,显示出回避者更少的精心的结构编码以及受到情绪内容唤醒更大的影响(Zhang, Li, & Zhou, 2008)。回避者在情绪信息加工早期阶段的敏感性反映了一种适应进化的对环境威胁与奖赏的优先反应,而这种对环境的早期敏感性则是回避者成功探测威胁的前提。Dan (2012)发现在面对愤怒和中性面孔时,只有回避型个体出现了显著差异的 C1 和 P1 成分,C1 和 P1 反映了最初的注意加工,代表着基于粗略视觉特征的视觉情绪刺激加工相关的早成分潜在机制(Rellecke et al., 2011),这一发现显示出只有回避者在信息加工早期阶段具备区分威胁与非威胁刺激的能力,表现出对威胁情绪信息的警觉和相关焦虑的敏感。

3.2. 晚期控制加工阶段的注意抑制

知觉偏差发生在信息加工的早期阶段,使回避者快速鉴别潜在的威胁,随后对其进行回避(Niedenthal et al., 2002)。根据这一假设,回避者的防御策略是一个次级的,需要认知努力的信息加工晚期的策略(Sonnby Borgström, & Jonsson, 2004)。有证据显示回避者难以回忆起依恋相关经验(Edelstein, 2006),Fraleay等人(2000)的研究证明这种提取困难来自于信息加工最初的注意或编码过程的认知资源限制投入。Dewitte (2011)同样报告了回避者对消极情绪的注意抑制。表情模仿任务中回避者在生气面孔呈现时间为 56 ms 时出现与非回避相似的皱眉反应,而在生气面孔呈现时间为 2350 ms 时出现“反转的微笑”,这一结果被解释为认知控制阶段对消极情绪的调节抑制。类似地,Suslow等人(2010)采用情绪启动技术发现了依恋回避与对悲伤面孔的情绪反应呈负相关,高回避导致对悲伤情绪面孔的冷漠反应。悲伤表情传递着对方的失望、沮丧以及对支持的需要,对于回避者而言,这样的渴望关系趋近的信号则无疑意味着对保持自我独立的威胁,因此对其抑制加工。这些研究为回避型的注意抑制以及抑制的特异性提供了初步

的证据。更多的研究采用情绪 Stroop 任务检验了个体对情绪信息的注意特征。Mikulincer 等人(2002)使用 stroop 任务考察依恋表征可及性的差异,结果发现在威胁启动条件下,威胁情境下回避者抑制了依恋相关信息的加工。Andriopoulos 和 Kafetsios (2015)同样发现在依恋系统未激活状态和阈下激活状态下回避者抑制了对依恋相关词汇语义的注意,但在阈上激活状态却报告了干扰效应的增加。研究者将这一结果解释为一种认知回避,即对相关刺激注意转移导致了任务反应时延长。尽管这一解释符合回避者一贯的回避应对风格(Avero et al., 2003),但结合 Edelstein 和 Gillath (2008)所报告的对依恋相关信息的回避抑制仅出现在处于关系状态个体身上的结果,处于关系之中被看做一种依恋系统的长期的阈下激活状态(Kafetsios & Andriopoulos, & Papachiou, 2014),依恋系统激活状态对注意抑制具有调节作用。阈下激活反映了一种低认知负荷条件,确保了去激活策略的成功运行,而阈上激活可能引发回避个体强烈的消极情绪以及相关的消极想法,个体需要额外的认知资源来抑制这些想法,意味着一种高认知负荷条件。

控制加工阶段的脑区激活模式进一步阐明了回避者注意抑制的神经基础。非安全型个体在进行情绪词 stroop 任务时对消极情绪词汇表现出如右半球额上回(right hemisphere Superior Frontal Gyms)、背外侧前额叶(dorsolateral prefrontal areas, DLPFC)以及眶额皮层(orbitofrontal cortex, OFC)等认知控制相关脑区激活的增加(Warren et al., 2010)。尽管没有对不安全类型做出具体区分,但这一研究初步提供了非安全个体在进行情绪抑制加工的脑区激活证据。类似的激活模式在 Vrtička 等人(2012)的研究中也得到体现。当被试被要求自发观看积极或消极的社会情境图片,观看消极情境图片时前额叶以及前扣带回区域活动增加,反映了高度的认知情绪冲突与增加的抑制调节。在被要求使用抑制策略时,回避者观看积极社会情境图片时在辅助运动区以及尾状核出现激活的增加,显示出强烈的调节努力以及抑制策略的成功运用。

4. 防御性排斥的失效机制

Niedenthal 等人(2002)认为附加的认知负荷将导致防御策略失效。当认知负荷过大或者消极情绪达到足够强度时,如回避型母亲面对孩子哭泣表情(Strathearn et al., 2009),表现为 stroop 干扰效应的增加。研究者往往采用增加认知负荷的方式来探讨去激活策略失效机制。Mikulincer 和 Shaver (2004)通过让被试回忆痛苦的分离经历来阈上激活被试的依恋系统,结果发现在高认知负荷下回避者对分离相关词 stroop 干扰效应增加,表现出对分离相关思维抑制的回弹,同时更可能激活个体消极的自我表征。来自情绪线索提示范式的证据同样证明去激活抑制的认知消耗特征。在 Chun 等人(2015)的实验中,轻蔑面孔呈现时间为 750 ms 条件下,当回避者被要求重复一个 7 位数字,更加快速的反应意味着额外的认知资源消耗干扰了回避者对轻蔑表情的注意解离。

Gillath 等人(2005)的研究结果显示了非回避者在胼胝体下扣带皮层(subcallosal cingulate cortex, SCC)和外侧前额叶皮层(lateral prefrontal cortex, LPFC)两个脑区比回避者更高水平的去激活, SCC 和 LPFC 已被证实是参与抑制相关脑区,非回避者在 SCC 与 LPFC 两个脑区激活水平的减少与前人研究(Binder et al., 1999; Mazoyer et al., 2001)中其他前额区减少的血流量类似,被认为是一种由“Not-think”任务所引发的成功的去激活,而回避者稳定的激活水平则显示出一种无效的抑制。类似地,在 Hester 等人(2004)的研究中,左侧内侧额叶区(BA9)的去激活被认为与任务要求抑制的成功抑制有关。相比失败抑制,当成功抑制时,这一区域出现了显著的去激活,同时表现出额区,顶区以及扣带回区域激活水平的增加。这一调节过程反映了个体自上而下的控制,既减少了监控内在状态的资源的投入,同时增加了加工外在刺激的注意资源。然而在上述研究中这种调节过程仅出现在非回避个体身上。在这一区域失败的去激活反映出回避者在执行抑制任务时较差的表现。相比非回避者的情绪调节,回避者的抑制策略在情绪调节中并不完善可靠。在 Vrtička 等人(2012)的实验中,回避者在认知重评阶段面对消极社会情境图片左侧杏仁核出现持续激活,而安全型则表现出更低的杏仁核活动。杏仁核在重评阶段失败的去激活也许能够解释为什

么在去激活策略失效后，回避者将体验更为强烈的消极情绪。如果有限的资源被其他因素如生活压力或情绪认知负荷所占据，回避防御可能崩塌瓦解，回避者将会体验到难以忍受的消极情绪，可能导致长期的心理健康问题。尽管有大量文献探讨了成人依恋风格如何影响信息加工，回避者的去激活策略的功能有效性是仍待解决的一个问题。

5. 总结与展望

成人依恋现阶段研究主题之一即关注人格的精神动力学过程——知觉、情绪以及认知的交互作用服务于动机目标(Shaver & Mikulincer, 2002)。回避者通常抑制或降低情绪反应，习惯与他人保持情感上的距离(Mikulincer & Shaver, 2004)，许多研究发现这种显著的社交拒绝特点与回避者对情绪信息的防御加工有关(Gillath, 2009; 马书采, 2013)。前文梳理了回避者加工消极情绪信息的防御特征，但仍然有许多问题有待探索。在未来研究中可以关注：

首先，回避型依恋与警觉-抑制注意模式的因果基础需要进一步探讨。回避者对威胁信息存在一种警觉-回避的抑制性加工风格，但这种抑制加工的原因有待进一步考察。到底是警觉回避的注意模式导致形成亲密关系中的回避依恋，或者是过去经历引发的回避依恋导致这种警觉回避的注意模式，需要进一步的实验证实。尽管依恋理论假设认为回避者无法忍受威胁信息所伴随的痛苦体验，所以抑制了对其加工。但目前无法排除前一种假设的可能。注意训练被证明是减轻焦虑易感性的有效措施(MacLeod & Mathews, 2012)，这不仅能够帮助更好理解回避者如何加工消极信息，还有助于探讨这一加工过程如何被调节(Chun et al., 2015)。

其次，更加关注回避者防御性加工情绪信息的后果。无论是，少有研究关注对消极情绪的警觉回避的防御措施对个人发展的影响。一方面，回避防御作为一种保护机制，能够帮助回避者调节压力，具有一定的适应性；另一方面，这种回避防御并非一种良好的适应方式，而在本质上是一种对压力的否认，安全型依恋个体依恋对象的反应性和自我价值感保证了对压力信息处理的自信，而回避者则不然。安全感的体验并非建立在否认压力的基础之上，一旦这种防御崩塌，回避个体将承受巨大的消极情绪压力以及更为长期的心理健康风险。另一方面也要关注对积极情绪的加工偏向，最近的研究发现了回避者对不同类别积极情绪刺激一种泛化的冷漠感知(Yee & Shiota, 2015)，这一偏向是否会对个体的一般社交互动产生影响有待未来研究进一步考证。良好的情绪沟通是维持关系的必要条件，对伴侣情绪的排斥或冷漠感知，可以预测更低的关系满意度(Tan, Overall, & Taylor, 2012)以及更大可能性的关系解离(Le, Dove, Agnew, Korn, & Mutso, 2010)。未来研究应关注情绪知觉发生的人际情境以及对关系管理和社会功能的影响。

最后，去激活策略功能的有效性亟待深入考察。尽管去激活策略已被证实是回避者所使用的次级依恋策略，在情绪信息加工中，这一策略的运行需要耗费一定的认知资源(Kohn et al., 2012)。大多数研究通过增加认知负荷的方式验证了回避者去激活抑制的控制加工。在认知资源枯竭的情况下，去激活策略将失效。尽管已有情绪调节相关研究揭示了去激活策略失效过程中的神经活动，但对于认知负荷施加过程中，情绪加工抑制如何失效、相关脑区产生了怎样的活动还不清楚。依恋系统激活状态是否对去激活策略的运行存在影响？情境的因素如何影响去激活过程。影像学研究缺乏在更为复杂和真实的情境中这些效应的实验证据。未来研究应该致力于在更为复杂真实的社会互动中测量回避防御发生过程中的大脑反应，或至少在实验室情境中创设更为真实的过程，以便我们能够更深入理解回避者防御抑制在关系互动中的运行机制及其影响。

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