
Prior meta-analytic reviews have indicated that cognitive and behavioral treatments are efficacious in treating child and adolescent depression and anxiety. Further, a meta-analysis has suggested that behavioral treatments are superior to nonbehavioral treatments for treating anxiety and depression in youth. However, the prior meta-analysis did not examine direct comparisons between cognitive and behavioral treatments (CBT) and non-CBT treatments, leaving open the possibility that their results were artifactual. The present meta-analysis aggregated results of studies in which CBT treatments were compared with either other bona fide treatments (including other CBT therapies) or non-bona fide therapies. The heterogeneity of the distribution of differences between bona fide treatments as well as a comparison of full (e.g. CBT + Parent training) versus component treatments (e.g., CBT only) were examined. The results indicated that: (a) CBT was more efficacious than non-bona fide therapies; (b) CBT was no more efficacious than bona fide non-CBT treatments (c) the differences between bona fide treatments were homogenously distributed around zero; and (d) full CBT treatments offered no significant benefit over their components. The results strongly suggest that the theoretically purported critical ingredients of CBT are not specifically ameliorative for child and adolescent depression and anxiety.