Silent Rage
Understanding and Treating Maladaptive Anger Inhibition

av

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Abstract

Maladaptive anger inhibition can be defined as the excessive suppression of angry expressions while remaining intensely angry from within. A growing body of research suggests that maladaptive anger inhibition is associated with various negative outcomes including physical health risks and psychopathology. This thesis aimed to advance our understanding of maladaptive anger inhibition in adults and develop and evaluate novel treatments for this problem. To this end, four studies were conducted.

Study I explored for the presence of anger subgroups in an anger-treatment-seeking sample and identified four groups. Of primary relevance was an "anger-in" profile characterized by low outward anger expression combined with elevated internal anger, consistent with maladaptive anger inhibition. *Study II* used network analysis to examine associations among anger components and regulation strategies in the same sample, identifying anger rumination as a central process potentially involved in maintaining maladaptive anger inhibition. *Study III* experimentally investigated the effects of state anger suppression in combination with subsequent regulation strategies, showing that suppression followed by rumination increased anger, whereas suppression followed by reappraisal or continued suppression was associated with reduced anger and improved physiological regulation. *Study IV* evaluated an emotion regulation-focused treatment for maladaptive anger inhibition, demonstrating feasibility, acceptability, and promising preliminary effects.

Together, findings suggest that maladaptive anger inhibition represents a clinically relevant problem that may be responsive to targeted emotion regulation-focused treatment.

Keywords: Anger, Aggression, Anger Suppression, Anger Inhibition, Anger Rumination, Emotion Regulation, Mindfulness