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Paranoia and grandiosity in the general population: differential associations with putative causal factors

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Worry, negative self-beliefs, and sleep disturbance have been identified as contributory factors to the onset, maintenance, and severity of paranoia. We tested the specificity of these contributory factors to paranoia compared to grandiosity, a different type of delusional ideation. Data were used from 814 adults from the Nathan Kline Institute-Rockland (NKI-Rockland) study, a general population dataset. Paranoid and grandiose delusional ideation was assessed using the Peters Delusions Inventory (PDI-21) and correlated with negative self-beliefs, and sleep quality. self-reported worry, Correlations were compared using Fisher's r-to-z transform to examine whether the magnitude of relationships differed by delusion type. Paranoia was significantly associated with worry, negative selfbelief, and sleep quality. Grandiosity demonstrated significantly weaker relationships with worry and negative self-beliefs. Relationships with sleep quality were similar. We replicate previous reports that worry, negative self-beliefs and sleep quality are associated with paranoid ideation in the general population. We extend these findings by demonstrating that these contributory factors, particularly worry and negative self-beliefs, are associated with paranoid ideation to a greater extent than grandiosity. This suggests a degree of specificity of contributory factors to different types of delusional thinking, supporting the pursuit of specific psychological models and treatments for each delusion type.

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