Theoretical Orientation Debate

- Long running debates about most preferred psychotherapies
- Over 200 theoretical orientations, including:
  - acceptance and commitment therapy
  - behavioral therapy
  - cognitive behavioral
  - dialectical behavior
  - existential therapy
  - gestalt therapy
  - humanistic therapy
  - motivational interviewing
  - psychoanalytic
  - psychodynamic
  - acceptance and commitment therapy

Practitioner Therapy Preference

- APA survey on psychologist orientation preference (1960-2010; Norcross & Karpia, 2012)
- Descending order: cognitive, eclecticism/integration, psychodynamic, and behavioral, humanistic and Rogerian
- From 1960 - 2010, downward arc for psychodynamic and upward arc for cognitive orientation
- 2008 study of health service providers (Michalski et al., n.d.)
  - 39% - cognitive behavioral orientation, 16% - psychodynamic, 15% - integrative, and 4% - humanistic/existential
- Need to study therapy seeker preference

Research Questions

- We analyze Google search queries to determine
  - What is the relative interest in different therapies?
  - How has interest changed over time?
- Primary findings:
  - Cognitive therapy most searched
  - Psychodynamic therapy increased over the interval; psychoanalytic decreased

Data and Methods

- Tracked 12 popular theoretical orientations
- Google Trends (trends.google.com)
  - Aggregated search queries over time
  - Data accessed through trends Application Programming Interface (API)
  - Cannot limit population beyond geography
- Example:
  - Time period: January 1, 2004 - December 31, 2019
  - Mean searches by therapy by year
  - Mean searches by therapy by week of the year

References


Results

Table. Therapies listed in order of most searched on Google between 2004 and 2019.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Therapy Name</th>
<th>Mean number of searches per 10 million searches in the United States</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cognitive therapy</td>
<td>90.33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Behavioral therapy</td>
<td>74.43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cognitive behavioral therapy</td>
<td>49.30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Psychodynamic</td>
<td>29.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Motivational interviewing</td>
<td>20.93</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gestalt therapy</td>
<td>13.30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Psychoanalytic</td>
<td>10.42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Existential therapy</td>
<td>6.44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Humanistic therapy</td>
<td>4.42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acceptance and commitment therapy</td>
<td>3.67</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- Search preferences for cognitive, psychodynamic, and humanistic/existential therapies was similar to order preference for therapists (Norcross & Karpia, 2012; Michalski et al., n.d.)
- Cognitive-behavioral steadily increased and humanistic decreased, similar to therapist preference (1960-2010; Norcross & Karpia, 2012)
- Searches for psychodynamic therapy increased, while psychoanalytic decreased; reflecting declines in psychoanalytic popularity (see Paris, 2017)