

Measuring Online Information Seeking for Theoretical Orientations from Google Search Queries

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Theoretical Orientation Debate

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

Practitioner Therapy Preference

- APA survey on psychologist orientation preference (1960-2010; Norcross & Karpiak, 2012)
- Descending order: cognitive, eclectic/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

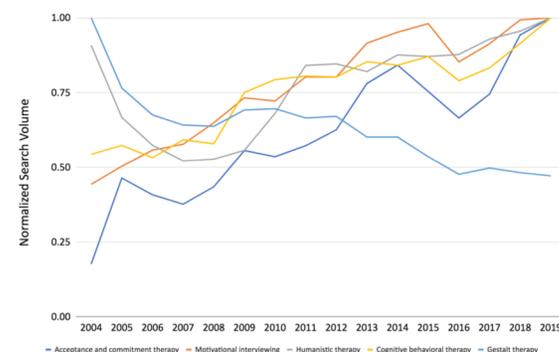
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Results

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

| Therapy Name | Mean number of searches per 10 million searches in the United States. |
|-----------------------------------|---|
| Cognitive therapy | 90.33 |
| Behavioral therapy | 74.43 |
| Cognitive behavioral therapy | 49.30 |
| Psychodynamic | 29.07 |
| Motivational interviewing | 20.93 |
| Dialectical behavior therapy | 13.30 |
| Gestalt therapy | 10.42 |
| Psychodynamic therapy | 6.44 |
| Existential therapy | 4.42 |
| Humanistic therapy | 4.40 |
| Acceptance and commitment therapy | 3.67 |

- Search preferences for cognitive, psychodynamic, then humanistic/existential therapies was similar to order preference for therapists (Norcross & Karpiak, 2012; Michalski et al., n.d.)



Caption: The normalized search volume for the 5 types of therapy that show the largest variance in number of searches over time.

- Cognitive-behavioral steadily increased and humanistic decreased, similar to therapist preference (1960-2010; Norcross & Karpiak, 2012)
- Searches for psychodynamic therapy increased, while psychoanalytic decreased; reflecting declines in psychoanalytic popularity (see Paris, 2017)