

Humboldt Kolleg

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Global Challenges of the 21st Century

- 1) Technological development and human health/ quality of life*
- 2) Climate change and environmental sustainability*
- 3) Democracy and cohesion in Europe*

More Logic for Less Intolerance of Uncertainty: Evidence-based Therapeutic Approaches to Socially Relevant Anxiety Disorders

In classical logic, there are four kinds of conditional arguments, two of which are valid and two invalid. Affirmation of the consequent (AC) has the structure „If a then b, b. Therefore a”, and pertains to the latter category. It is invalid because the conclusion a doesn't follow necessarily from the premises. The logically correct conclusion is that „nothing follows from the premises”. But this response is tantamount to a maximal degree of uncertainty. According to Dugas et al. 1998, intolerance of uncertainty is the defining feature of generalised anxiety disorder; Boswell et al. 2013 have taken this further and argued for a transdiagnostic explanatory role of the intolerance of uncertainty for anxiety and depression. I will present a pilot experiment meant to test the hypothesis that people's scores at the scale of intolerance of uncertainty (Robichaud & Dugas, 2007) predict the acceptance of AC conclusions. From here, we can draw conclusions regarding the potential use of conditional arguments in cognitive restructuring targeted at reducing the degree of intolerance of uncertainty. We can focus on the potential implications of this approach for increasing the social functionality of people who suffer from mood disorders.

Alexandra Varga is working as a cognitive-behavioural psychotherapist. After obtaining a PhD in Philosophy at CEU, Budapest, she worked in a multidisciplinary team at the Cognitive Science Lab of the University of Giessen. The German Research Foundation program *New Frameworks of Rationality* supported her research in the field of rationality and reasoning. She then decided to make use of the acquired research skills and teaching abilities for psychotherapy. To her expertise in Philosophy, she added a Psychology BA and went through training in cognitive behavioural psychotherapy. Her current research interests are at the confluence of evidence-based clinical psychology and the psychology of reasoning.