Prototype analysis on beliefs about people with depression: 
Examining Japanese university students

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The present studies examined what kinds of beliefs are typically held about people with depression based on data from samples of Japanese university students. Study 1a utilized text describing people with depression that was divided into categories, and examined which categories were most frequently described. In Study 1b, participants rated how much they agreed with the beliefs categorized in Study 1a. A similar approach was taken in Study 2a (qualitative) and 2b (quantitative), in order to examine prototypic negative beliefs. Results from Study 1a and 1b indicated that prototypic beliefs were the “serious and working too hard” belief in regard to characteristics of people with depression, and the “taking too much things on oneself” belief related to personal responsibility. Results from 2a and 2b indicated that prototypic negative beliefs were the “gloomy” belief in regard to characteristics of people with depression, and the “mental weakness” belief related to personal responsibility. Implications for research on stigma toward people with depression are discussed.

Keywords: depression, people with depression, beliefs, stigma, prototype analysis.

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