


## Contemporaneity and the racing thinking syndrome: Risk factors, symptoms, diagnoses and forms of treatment

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## **ABSTRACT**

This research aimed to analyze the risk factors, symptoms, diagnoses, and treatments associated with Accelerated Thinking Syndrome. To this end, a literature search was applied and, as a result, it was found that Accelerated Thinking Syndrome is a contemporary phenomenon that affects people's mental health and quality of life, characterized by acceleration of mental processes, cognitive overload, and constant feeling of haste. Factors such as fast-paced lifestyle, exposure to digital stimuli, and personality traits can all contribute to their development. Proper diagnosis requires careful evaluation of symptoms and medical history. Treatment involves a multidisciplinary approach, including psychotherapy, relaxation techniques, self-care, and lifestyle modifications. Understanding the syndrome and seeking balance between daily demands and personal well-being are essential to promote mental health and improve quality of life.

**Keywords:** Racing Thinking Syndrome, Anxiety, Psychic.



## INTRODUCTION

Racing Thinking Syndrome is a contemporary phenomenon that has aroused interest and concern in the field of mental health. Characterized by an intense acceleration of mental processes, cognitive overload, and a constant feeling of haste, this syndrome has significant impacts on individuals' lives. Understanding the effects of this syndrome on quality of life is essential for the development of intervention strategies and well-being promotion (CURY, 2013).

In the current context, marked by an accelerated pace of life, technological advances and an overload of information, Accelerated Thinking Syndrome has manifested itself in an increasingly frequent and evident way. The individual affected by this syndrome feels an incessant mental agitation, with a mind that does not stop producing thoughts, questions and worries, resulting in a difficulty in slowing down and relaxing (GARCIA, 2017).

The impacts of Racing Thinking Syndrome are vast and encompass different areas of the individual's life. In the emotional sphere, there is a greater propensity to stress, anxiety and even the emergence of mental disorders such as depression. Constant mental agitation can generate a feeling of inability to cope with the demands of daily life, in addition to impairing sleep and the ability to concentrate (RIOS, 2004).

In addition to the emotional aspects, the syndrome also affects the individual's social and interpersonal life. Excessive thinking and worrying can make it difficult to interact with others, resulting in feelings of isolation and difficulty establishing healthy relationships. Academic and professional performance can also be impaired, since mental hyperactivity hinders focus, organization, and productivity (CURY, 2017).

In view of these challenges, this research aimed to analyze the risk factors, symptoms, diagnoses and treatments associated with Accelerated Thinking Syndrome. To achieve this general objective, the following specific objectives were established: to identify the main risk factors that contribute to the development of Accelerated Thinking Syndrome; analyze the characteristic symptoms of this syndrome and its manifestation in the emotional, social, academic and professional spheres; investigate the diagnostic methods and criteria used to identify Racing Thinking Syndrome.

To this end, a bibliographic research was applied through the survey of articles, theses, books and reliable sources of research that address the emotional, social, academic and professional aspects related to this syndrome. The bibliographic surveys took place on platforms such as: Scielo, Google Scholar and PubMed.

Through the analysis and synthesis of scientific studies and relevant publications, it was possible to identify the main aspects related to this syndrome and its effects on the various domains of life. This review proved to be essential to support strategies for intervention and promotion of mental health, with the aim of improving the quality of life and well-being of affected individuals.



From the analysis of the results found, it is expected to contribute to the understanding of this phenomenon and subsidize actions aimed at promoting mental health and better coping with the challenges imposed by Accelerated Thinking Syndrome. By understanding the extent of the impacts of this syndrome on quality of life, it will be possible to develop more effective intervention and prevention strategies, aimed at both mental health professionals and individuals experiencing Accelerated Thinking Syndrome. The search for solutions that minimize the negative effects and promote a more balanced and satisfying life for these people becomes, therefore, a relevant challenge of great importance in contemporary times.

## DEVELOPMENT

### ACCELERATED THINKING SYNDROME: HISTORICAL CONTEXTUALIZATION AND CONCEPTS

Racing Thinking Syndrome is, according to Cury (2017), a contemporary phenomenon that has gained prominence in the area of mental health. Characterized by an acceleration of mental processes, an incessant flow of thoughts, and a constant feeling of haste, this syndrome has had significant impacts on people's lives. To understand this condition more deeply, it is necessary to contextualize it historically and understand its fundamental concepts.

The Accelerated Thinking Syndrome emerges in a social and cultural context marked by technological advancement, increased speed of information, and rapid and constant changes. This acceleration affects not only the rhythm of everyday life but also the human mind, leading to the emergence of this syndrome characterized by mental hyperactivity (CURY, 2017).

As Garcia (2017) points out, the term "Accelerated Thinking Syndrome" was introduced by Brazilian psychiatrist Augusto Cury in his book "Anxiety: How to Face the Evil of the Century". Cury described the syndrome as a condition in which the mind is constantly occupied with an uninterrupted stream of thoughts, questions, and worries, resulting in a difficulty slowing down and relaxing.

This syndrome is closely linked to the acceleration of the contemporary world, in which people are increasingly burdened with multiple demands, tight deadlines, and information in constant flux. The pressure for productivity, success, and personal achievements also contributes to mental acceleration. Constant access to electronic devices and the need to always be connected also influence the mental hyperactivity characteristic of this syndrome (CURY, 2017).

For Olaf (2015), one of the fundamental concepts related to Accelerated Thinking Syndrome is "cognitive overload". This term refers to the excess of stimuli and information that the brain needs to process on a daily basis, leading to an excessive load of cognitive work. Cognitive overload can



lead to mental fatigue, difficulty concentrating, reduced ability to make decisions, and increased stress.

Another important concept is that of "mental rumination." People with Racing Thinking Syndrome tend to constantly ruminate on thoughts and worries, reliving past events or incessantly anticipating future events. This intense and continuous mental rumination hinders the ability to relax and enjoy the present moment (OLAF, 2015).

Importantly, Racing Thinking Syndrome should not be confused with Generalized Anxiety Disorder (GAD) or other mental disorders. Although there may be overlapping symptoms, the syndrome is mainly characterized by an acceleration of mental processes and cognitive overload, while anxiety disorders involve an intense and persistent emotional response (FERRAZ-FILHO; BRANDÃO, 2015).

In short, Racing Thinking Syndrome is a contemporary phenomenon that manifests itself as an acceleration of mental processes, cognitive overload, and a constant feeling of haste. Contextualized in a fast-paced world full of information, this syndrome affects people's daily lives, negatively influencing mental health and quality of life. Understanding its concepts and characteristics is essential to develop intervention strategies and promotion of well-being.

## RISK FACTORS ASSOCIATED WITH RACING THINKING

Racing Thinking Syndrome is a complex phenomenon that can be influenced by a variety of factors. These risk factors can contribute to the development and worsening of this condition, making it important to identify and understand them in detail.

According to Cury (2015), one of the main risk factors associated with Accelerated Thinking is a fast-paced and stressful lifestyle. The contemporary world, with its constant demands, tight deadlines, and a culture that values productivity and success, can lead people to a frenetic pace of life. Excessive activity, overload of responsibilities and pressure for results can overwhelm the individual, contributing to mental acceleration.

Another relevant risk factor is constant exposure to digital stimuli. Technology plays a significant role in accelerating thinking, as electronic devices such as smartphones and computers provide immediate access to information, social networks, messages, and notifications. The constant connection and the need to always be up to date can generate a feeling of haste and contribute to mental acceleration (CURY, 2015).

Authors such as Tisser (2017) add that cognitive overload is a central risk factor associated with Accelerated Thinking. The excessive amount of information, tasks, and stimuli that people are exposed to on a daily basis can lead to a heightened cognitive workload. The need to process and



assimilate a large amount of data can lead to a constantly busy mind, making it difficult to slow down and calm down mentally.

Personality traits can also influence the development of Accelerated Thinking. Individuals with a tendency toward perfectionism, high self-demand, and a strong desire for control are more likely to experience an acceleration of mental processes. The relentless pursuit of excellence and the fear of making mistakes can lead to a constant stream of thoughts and worries (TISSER, 2017).

In addition, Wilson (2011) emphasizes that past experiences of stress, trauma, or challenging situations can increase vulnerability to Accelerated Thinking. Traumatic events, such as significant losses, health problems, or personal difficulties, can lead to a state of mental hyperactivity as a way of trying to cope with these situations.

## SYMPTOMS OF RACING THINKING

According to Cury (2015), one of the most common symptoms is the presence of an incessant flow of thoughts. People who suffer from this syndrome have difficulty slowing down their mind, experiencing a continuous flurry of rapidly succeeding thoughts, making it difficult to focus on a single task or appreciate the present moment. These thoughts can be varied in nature, including worries, questions, future plans, or constant reflections on past events.

Also according to the author, another frequent symptom is the feeling of constant haste. Individuals with Accelerated Thinking have the perception that time is passing too fast and that they need to hurry to keep up with the fast pace of everyday life. This feeling of haste can lead to constant restlessness and impatience, making it difficult to relax and calm mind.

Difficulty relaxing and slowing down is a hallmark symptom of the syndrome. Even when they are in moments of rest or leisure, the person with Racing Thinking continues to have a restless mind, unable to disconnect from thoughts and worries. This can lead to difficulties sleeping, as the mind remains active even during the night, interfering with restful sleep (CURY, 2015).

For Tisser (2017), cognitive overload is another relevant symptom. The individual with Accelerated Thinking feels constantly overwhelmed by the amount of information they need to process and assimilate. This overwhelm can result in difficulty concentrating, a lack of mental clarity, and a feeling of being mentally drained.

In addition, anxiety is also commonly associated with Racing Thinking. The acceleration of mental processes and cognitive overload can generate an anxious response, since the mind is constantly occupied with worries and anticipations. Anxiety can manifest itself through physical symptoms such as tachycardia, sweating, muscle tension, and rapid breathing (TISSER, 2017).

In addition, Racing Thinking Syndrome can affect the ability to make decisions. With the mind constantly occupied with a multiplicity of thoughts, the individual may have difficulty focusing



on a single task or analyzing all options appropriately, resulting in hasty decisions or a lack of clarity in choices. It is important to note that the presence of these symptoms does not necessarily mean that the person has the syndrome clinically. However, when these symptoms are persistent, cause significant distress, and interfere with daily activities and quality of life, it is recommended to seek professional support for an appropriate diagnosis and therapeutic guidance (CURY, 2015).

## DIAGNOSIS OF RACING THINKING

Diagnosing Racing Thinking Syndrome involves careful evaluation of symptoms, medical history, and a comprehensive analysis of the individual's cognitive and emotional functioning. Although there are no specific diagnostic criteria for this syndrome, mental health professionals can utilize a comprehensive approach to assess and identify the presence and severity of symptoms (CURY, 2015).

Initially, according to Fu-I et al. (2012), the health professional should conduct a detailed clinical interview with the individual, seeking to understand the nature of racing thoughts, the frequency and intensity of symptoms, as well as the impact on quality of life and daily activities. It is important to obtain information about the duration of symptoms, their progression over time, and any triggering or aggravating factors.

In addition to the clinical interview, validated questionnaires and rating scales can be used, which help in the identification and quantification of symptoms associated with Accelerated Thinking. These tools can help document symptoms more objectively and provide a comparative basis for tracking evolution over time (FU-I et al., 2012).

According to Abreu et al. (2006), the individual's medical and psychiatric history is also fundamental for the diagnostic process. It is important to rule out the presence of medical or psychiatric conditions that may be contributing to the symptoms of racing thinking. Anxiety disorders, obsessive-compulsive disorder, mood disorders, and attention deficit hyperactivity disorders are some of the conditions that can present with symptoms similar to Racing Thinking.

In addition, cognitive assessment may be performed to identify possible difficulties with attention, concentration, memory, or executive functioning associated with the syndrome. Neuropsychological testing and other specific assessments can be used to identify cognitive deficits or atypical patterns of brain functioning. It is worth mentioning that the diagnosis of Racing Thinking Syndrome should be made by qualified mental health professionals, such as psychologists or psychiatrists. They have the expertise to assess symptoms, rule out other similar conditions, and establish an accurate diagnosis (ABREU et al., 2006).

It is important to highlight that the diagnosis of Accelerated Thinking is a tool to understand and categorize the symptoms, helping to direct appropriate treatments and intervention strategies.





Each individual is unique, and treatment should be personalized, taking into account the specific needs and severity of the symptoms presented (TISSER, 2017).

## TREATMENT OF RACING THINKING

The treatment of Racing Thinking Syndrome aims to relieve symptoms, promote mental balance, and improve the individual's quality of life. Treatment usually involves a multidisciplinary approach, combining psychotherapeutic interventions, relaxation and self-care techniques, lifestyle modifications, and, in some cases, the use of medications (WILSON, 2011).

From Frankl's (2018) perspective, psychotherapy plays a key role in the treatment of Accelerated Thinking. Cognitive-behavioral therapies (CBT), acceptance and commitment therapy (ACT), and mind-focused therapy can be utilized to help the individual develop self-awareness skills, identify and challenge dysfunctional thought patterns, manage anxiety, and promote a shift in perspective regarding the time and demands of everyday life. Therapy can also address issues related to self-demand, perfectionism, and developing effective coping strategies.

In addition to therapy, relaxation and self-care techniques are important to reduce mental acceleration. Regular physical exercise, such as walking, yoga, or meditation, can help calm the mind, reduce anxiety, and promote a state of relaxation. Deep breathing, mindfulness, and engaging in pleasurable activities can also be incorporated as part of treatment (FRANKL, 2018).

Lifestyle modification also plays a significant role in treating Accelerated Thinking. This includes setting healthy boundaries, prioritizing activities that promote relaxation and well-being, establishing a proper sleep routine, and making time for rest and leisure. Reducing the time of exposure to digital stimuli, establishing regular breaks during the day, and practicing organization and time management techniques can also help slow down the mind (TISSER, 2017).

In some cases, medications may be prescribed to aid in the treatment of Racing Thinking. Medications may include anxiolytics, mood stabilizers, or antidepressants, depending on the patient's individual symptoms and needs. It is important to discuss the benefits, risks, and side effects of medications with a medical specialist, such as a psychiatrist, before starting any pharmacological treatment (CURY, 2015).

## FINAL THOUGHTS

Based on this bibliographic research, it is found that Accelerated Thinking Syndrome is a contemporary phenomenon that has stood out in the area of mental health, affecting people's daily lives and interfering with quality of life. This syndrome is characterized by an acceleration of mental processes, cognitive overload, and a constant feeling of haste.





Thus, understanding the concepts, risk factors, symptoms, and diagnosis associated with Accelerated Thinking is essential for the development of intervention strategies and promotion of well-being. Factors such as fast-paced lifestyle, constant exposure to digital stimuli, cognitive overload, personality traits, and past experiences of stress can all contribute to the development and worsening of this condition.

Proper diagnosis of the syndrome requires careful evaluation of symptoms, medical history, and a comprehensive analysis of the individual's cognitive and emotional functioning. Qualified mental health professionals play a key role in this process, using clinical interviews, questionnaires, and specific assessments to accurately identify and categorize symptoms.

The treatment of Accelerated Thinking, on the other hand, involves a multidisciplinary approach, combining psychotherapy, relaxation and self-care techniques, lifestyle modifications and, in some cases, the use of medications. Psychotherapy plays a key role in promoting self-knowledge, developing strategies to deal with racing thoughts, and seeking mental balance. Relaxation techniques, such as meditation and mindfulness, can help calm the mind and reduce anxiety.

Additionally, it is essential for people to adopt self-care practices, such as setting healthy boundaries, prioritizing rest and leisure, pursuing pleasurable activities, and learning to slow down. Lifestyle modifications, such as reducing exposure to digital stimuli, establishing balanced routines, and seeking a balance between daily demands, are also important for dealing with Accelerated Thinking.



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