

# **Constructs Contributing towards Vulnerability in Patients with Social Anxiety: A Study in Hospital Patients**

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Individuals who are socially anxious have lower self-acceptance, negative appraisal of own performances, self-devaluation and increased avoidance of social situations. Hypersensitivity to social threat, risk avoidance and cognitive bias are observed in these types of subjects. Several researches indicated higher negative appraisal and lower self-esteem in social anxiety disorder. It can be hypothesized that preoccupation with social feedback and related distresses with negative cognitive style can be predictive factors for treatment response in clinical depression.

The aim of the present work is to understand associations between negative appraisal, self-esteem, preoccupation with other's acceptance, and resultant affective outcome.

**Methods:** Total eighty (n=80) patients from a government hospital in Kolkata were selected who had been diagnosed with social anxiety. Social anxiety, positive and negative affects, self-esteem, and depression symptoms were measured using LSA Scale, PANAS, GSEI and BDI. Preoccupation related to social events was measured by a structured self-rated measure.

**Results:** Social anxiety was significantly positively related to depressive symptoms,  $r = 0.47$ ,  $p < 0.001$ , preoccupation,  $r = 0.35$ ,  $p < 0.005$ , negative affect,  $r = 0.24$ ,  $p < 0.05$ , and global self-esteem,  $r = 0.42$ ,  $p < 0.001$ . Depressive symptoms were only significantly related to negative affect,  $r$ 's = 0.32 and 0.41,  $p$ 's < 0.005. Negative affect was positively related to social anxiety and depressive symptoms,  $r$ 's = 0.24 and 0.41,  $p$ 's < 0.05. As for gender differences, men reported significantly greater social anxiety than women,  $t(81) = 2.38$ ,  $p < 0.05$ . No other gender main or interaction effects were found in any of our models and analyses. Hierarchical regression analyses were conducted to test the roles of social anxiety, positive and

negative affects, self-esteem, and their interactions in the prediction of depressive symptoms.

**Discussion:** Consistent with theoretical frameworks (Clark & Wells, 1995; Rapee & Heimberg, 1997; Leary, 2000), our findings indicate that social anxiety has been found to be associated with lower self-esteem and greater negative preoccupation. However, these effects were largely limited to those individuals with elevated depressive symptoms, suggesting that the combination of both social anxiety and depressive symptomatology initiate and can eventually leads to lower self-esteem and negative preoccupation. At higher levels of social anxiety, negative preoccupation was associated with increases in negative affect following decline of self-esteem. Socially anxious individuals tend to continue review of social situations which are dominated by negative interpretation biases including selective attention to anxious feelings, inferring negative outcomes based on the experience and perceived anxiety and interpreting events as social failures and developing lower self-esteem. These eventually lead to adverse mood state.

**Conclusion:** Individuals with social anxiety subject themselves to more negative appraisal and lowering of self-regulatory resources (e.g., preoccupation, self presentation) leading to amplification of emotional distress, affective dysregulation and adverse mood state.

### **References:**

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