

## Abstract

**Introduction:** Relationship between social anxiety and peer victimization established in children and adolescents (Flanagan et al., 2008) but not young adults.

**Method:** Participants completed measures of social anxiety and peer victimization at two time points as well as a computer game that simulated social exclusion.

**Results:** Higher social anxiety related to higher levels of teasing and higher anxiety after exclusion. Higher appearance teasing at Time 1 was associated with higher social anxiety at Time 2.

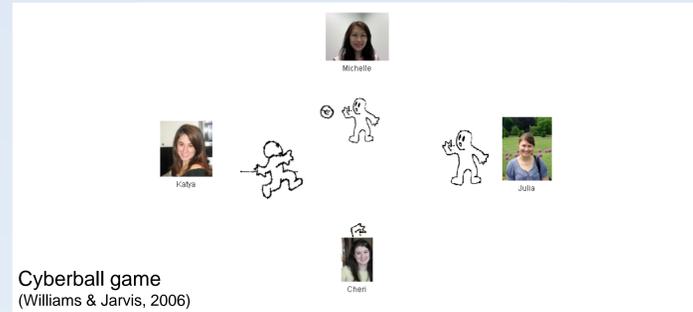
**Discussion:** Some forms of peer victimization may be a risk factor for higher social anxiety.

## Introduction

- Social anxiety related to peer victimization in children and adolescents (Flanagan et al., 2008; Siegel et al., 2009)
- Adults with SAD more likely to report history of teasing than those with obsessive compulsive or panic disorder (McCabe et al., 2003)
- No known prior research on relationship between peer victimization and social anxiety over time in young adults
- Tested in current study:
  - Relationship between peer victimization and social anxiety across two time points
  - Relationship between social anxiety and simulated peer exclusion
- Hypotheses:
  - Higher social anxiety will relate to higher state anxiety after exclusion
  - Higher state anxiety after exclusion will relate to higher social anxiety at Time 2
  - Peer victimization at Time 1 will predict social anxiety at Time 2

## Participants

- Participants were 107 students
  - Time 1 (107 students)
  - Time 2 (49 students)
  - Mostly women ( $N = 67$ ; 63%)
  - Mostly Caucasian ( $N = 63$ ; 59%)
  - Mean age of 19.26



Cyberball game (Williams & Jarvis, 2006)

## Measures

**Straightforward Social Interaction Anxiety Scale** (S-SIAS; Mattick & Clarke, 1998; Rodebaugh et al., 2004)

- 20-item measure of anxiety-related reactions to social situations

**Straightforward Brief Fear of Negative Evaluation** (S-BFNE; Leary, 1983)

- Brief version of the original FNE (Watson & Clark, 1969)
- Measures fear of being negatively evaluated

**Brief State Anxiety Measure** (BSAM; Berg et al., 1998)

- 6-item measure of state anxiety

**Teasing Questionnaire** (TQ; Roth, Coles, & Heimberg, 2002)

- 20-item measure of recall about frequency of past teasing
- Four subscales: social, academic, appearance, and performance teasing

## Procedure

### Session 1:

- Participants completed self-report questionnaires of social anxiety and peer victimization
  - Participants played two rounds of Cyberball computer game (Williams & Jarvis, 2006) to simulate social exclusion
    - Simulates ball-throwing game
    - Excluded for one round and included for one round. Order counter-balanced.
    - Exclusion round: participant is thrown to at first, but then excluded for the rest of the game
    - BSAM before and after each round
  - Created a composite measure of social anxiety by combining the S-SIAS and S-BFNE
- ### Session 2:
- Approximately two months later
  - Participants completed self-report questionnaires

## Results: Computer Task

### Multiple regression analyses

- Social anxiety (part  $r = .23$ ,  $p = .021$ ) predicted anxiety from exclusion during the computer task over and above state anxiety before the task began (part  $r = -.13$ ,  $p = .183$ )

## Results: Time 2

- State anxiety (part  $r = .26$ ,  $p = .076$ ) from exclusion at Time 1 approached significance predicting social anxiety at Time 2
- Academic teasing (part  $r = -.53$ ,  $p < .001$ ), appearance teasing (part  $r = .51$ ,  $p < .001$ ), and Time 1 social anxiety (part  $r = .82$ ,  $p < .001$ ) were significant predictors of Time 2 social anxiety
- Performance and social teasing did not significantly predict social anxiety at Time 2

## Results: Time 1

### Zero-order correlations between self-reported peer victimization and social anxiety

	Social Anxiety	TQ total	Social	Academic	Appearance	Performance
Social Anxiety	.74					
TQ total	.32**	.79				
Social	.34**	.74**	.68			
Academic	.27**	.70**	.35**	.76		
Appearance	.18	.73**	.35**	.41**	.70	
Performance	.24*	.69**	.46**	.40**	.34**	.58

Social Anxiety is composite of the S-SIAS and S-BFNE; TQ total = Teasing Questionnaire Total; TQ Subscales: Social, Academic, Appearance, Performance; \*\* $p < .01$ , \* $p < .05$ ; The diagonal is Cronbach's Alpha.

## Discussion

- Individuals higher in social anxiety experience higher anxiety after completion of a computer task simulating peer victimization via social exclusion
- Individuals high in social anxiety are likely to experience particularly high levels of anxiety when they perceive peer victimization in daily life
- Individuals who reported higher levels of appearance teasing at Time 1 experienced higher levels of social anxiety at Time 2
- Peer victimization may be a risk factor for elevated social anxiety