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SOCIAL ANXIETY AND PERSONALITY TRAITS

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The prevalence of social anxiety is estimated of 7-12% of the general population and 18% of university student. Social anxiety has a high prevalence of psychiatry and personality comorbidity. At age of 18-25 years old 80% of social anxiety cases have onset. To detect social anxiety at that age maybe important to avoid chronicity of the illness.

Aims: To study personality traits associated with social anxiety in university students.

Methods: We designed a cross-sectional study at the Autonomous University of Barcelona. Student were recruited by an advertisement. All student signed the informed consent. We collected: Socio-demographic data, personal and family psychiatry history, and the Liebowitz Anxiety Scale (LSAS) and the Temperament and Character Inventory of Cloninger. We defined as a social anxiety group a LSAS ≥ 50 total score.

Results: Five hundred ninety-one students enter in the study. Final sample after excluded those who did not filled the rating scales was 574 participants: 75% were women, mean age (SD): 22.7 (5.3), 156 (124 women/32 men), 26% had social anxiety. Eighteen percent had family and 22% personal psychiatry history. The personality profile of the social anxiety group was: high *harm avoidance* (HA) ($p < .001$), low *novelty seeking* (NS) ($p < .001$), and low *self-directedness* (SD) ($p < .001$). By logistic regression, after corrected by sex, age, personal and family psychiatry history, HA (OR=1.118; 95%CI=1.081-1.155), NS (OR=0.954;95%CI=0.927-0.982) and SD (OR=0.957;95%CI=0.930-0.985) predicted social anxiety. R^2 Nagelkerke=0.442. Hosmer-Lemeshow test ($p > .05$).

Conclusions: A profile of high HA, low NS and SD personality dimensions may predict those university students with social anxiety.