

## P01-122 - EXPERIENTIAL AVOIDANCE IN SUBJECTS WITH SOCIAL ANXIETY

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**Objectives:** Experiential Avoidance (EA) has been conceptualised as one of the main vulnerability processes for psychopathology, including social anxiety, in the so-called ACT (Acceptance and Commitment Therapy) model - one of the “new wave” behavioral-cognitive approaches. EA refers to the degree to which an individual fuses with thoughts, avoids negative feelings, and is unable to act in the presence of difficult private events.

This study is aimed at exploring the role of EA in subjects with social anxiety.

**Methods:** Participants were 113 subjects recruited from the general population and with high levels of social anxiety as measured by means of the Liebowitz Social Anxiety Scale. Participants were classified into high and low experiential avoiders according to results from the Italian version of the Acceptance and Action Questionnaire.

**Results:** The two groups did not differ in gender, marital status, educational level, or age distributions. Between-groups differences on several psychological measures, including depression, general psychopathology, quality of life and well-being were explored. Results indicated that individuals with social anxiety reporting higher levels of EA showed higher levels of depression and psychopathology, and lower levels of quality of life and well-being than low-EA participants.

**Conclusions:** Consistent with theoretical predictions in the ACT model, these findings suggest that EA may play a significant role in moderating negative psychological outcomes in subjects with social anxiety.