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# Social Anxiety Disorder in Swedish Adolescents

Prevalence,  
Victimization & Development

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Malin Gren-Landell is working as a psychologist and researcher in the field of child and adolescent psychiatry at Linköping University Hospital and Linköping University. Her interest is in anxiety disorders, mainly social anxiety disorder, in children and adolescents.

Social anxiety disorder is known to be highly prevalent and stable in adults. Data on prevalence, course and psychosocial correlates of SAD in a Swedish adolescent population are though missing. In the present dissertation results revealed that SAD is common in Swedish adolescents, reported by 4.4% among those in grade 6 to 8 (aged 12 to 14). The point prevalence rate of self-reported SAD was higher, 10.6%, in older subjects (grade 11). In line with other studies, significant sex differences were found with girls reporting SAD to a higher degree than boys. The results showed high stability of social anxiety from grade 7 (age 13) to the second year of high school (age 17). This dissertation presents the first concurrent report on multiple victimization and SAD in older adolescents. An increased risk of SAD was found in girls who were reporting lifetime sexual victimization or maltreatment. In boys, a significant association was found between sexual victimization and SAD. Controlled studies are warranted to explore this relationship closer in order to inform models on prevention and treatment. Longitudinal studies on the development of SAD during the critical period of adolescence, using methods that capture intraindividual- and interindividual change, are sparse. In this thesis the author report on the developmental course of social anxiety in relation to peer victimization and depressive symptoms. A longitudinal sequential process with peer victimization preceding social anxiety that in turn mediated depressive symptoms was found. The high prevalence rates of SAD, stable course of social anxiety and the longitudinal association between SAD and depressive symptoms in community samples, call for early detection and finding effective methods for prevention and treatment.