Peer Victimization: A Risk Factor for Social Anxiety in Young Adults?
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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
• Test 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 1 (49 students)
    • Mostly women (N = 67; 63%)
    • Mostly Caucasian (N = 63; 59%)
    • Mean age of 19.26

Abstract

Tests in current study:
No known prior research on relationship between social anxiety and peer victimization in children and adolescents
• Peer victimization may be a risk factor for higher social anxiety.
• Relationship between peer victimization and social anxiety over time in children and adolescents (Flanagan et al., 2008; Siegel et al., 2009)
• Tested in current study:
  • Participants completed self-report questionnaires of social anxiety and peer victimization
  • Participants played two rounds of Cyberball computer game (Williams & Javors, 2006) to simulate social exclusion

Procedure

Session 1:
• Participants completed self-report questionnaires of social anxiety and peer victimization
• Participants played two rounds of Cyberball computer game (Williams & Javors, 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

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

Results: Time 1
Zero-order correlations between self-reported peer victimization and social anxiety

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<th>Academic</th>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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.