

# Moderating Impact of Interpersonal Stress on Adolescent Anxiety and Self-Esteem

Daniel Pien, Erin Long, Jami Young, and Benjamin Hankin  
University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign - Department of Psychology



## Background

- Social anxiety (SA) has a median age of onset of 13<sup>1</sup>
- Interpersonal stress (IS) often occurs during adolescence and is associated with anxiety<sup>2</sup>
- Socially anxious adolescents are more prone to encountering IS with peers in the form of rejection<sup>3</sup>, which has implications for self-esteem (SE)<sup>4</sup>
- The association between IS, SA and SE during adolescence is unclear<sup>5</sup>

## Research Question

Does interpersonal stress moderate the relationship between social anxiety and self-esteem?

### Hypothesis

- Adolescents with high IS will show a stronger negative relationship between SA and SE, as compared to adolescents with low IS.

## Methods

### Participants

- 681 youth ( $M_{age}=11.8$ ,  $SD=2.4$ ; 55% female)

### Procedure

- Questionnaires at baseline (T1) and 36 months later (T2)

### Measures

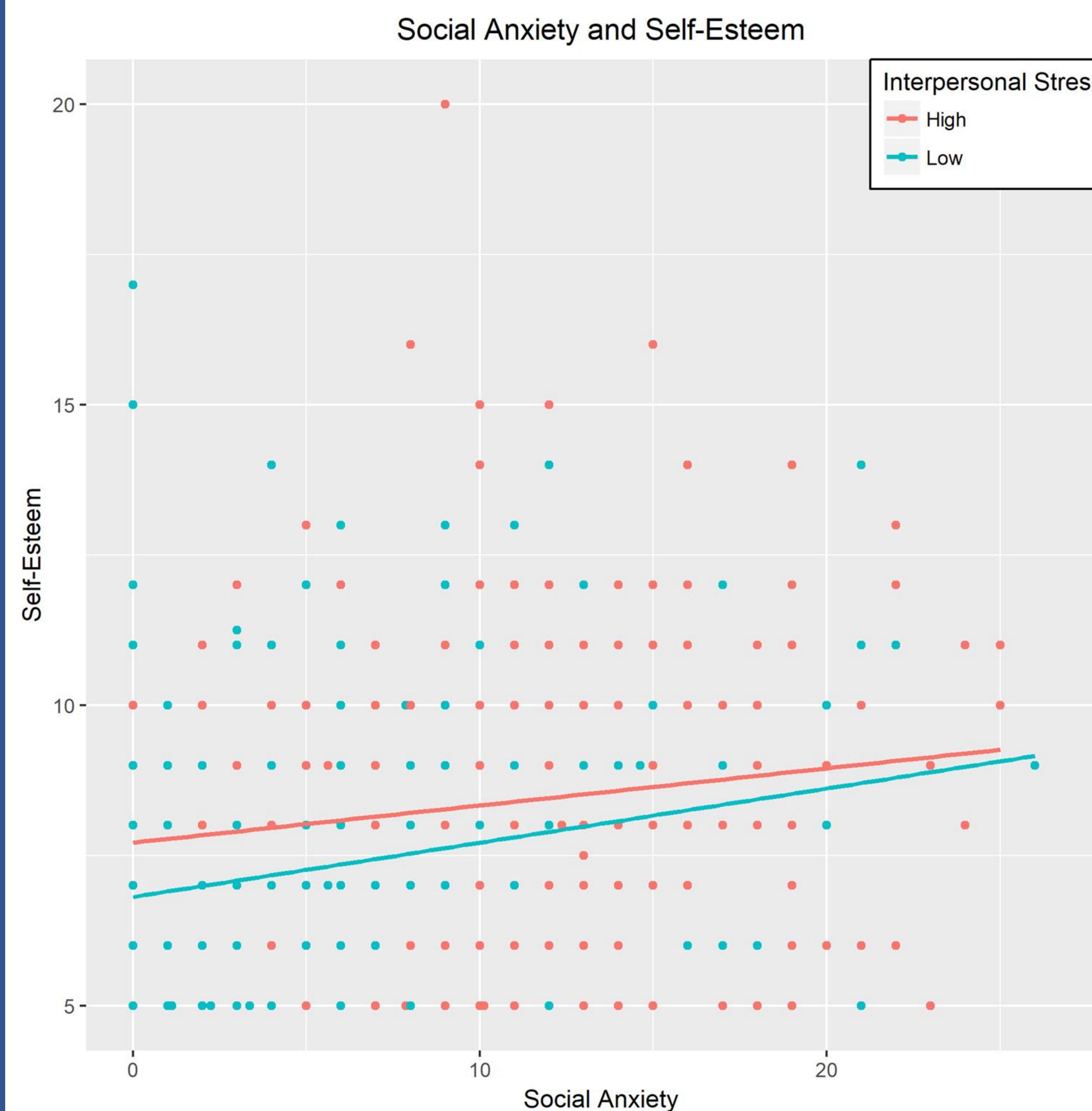
- Multidimensional Anxiety Scale for Children (MASC)<sup>6</sup>
- Self-Esteem Questionnaire (SEQ)<sup>7</sup>
- Adolescent Life Events Questionnaire (ALEQ)<sup>8</sup>

### Data Analytic Strategy

- Linear regression models
- Included baseline SE, age, and gender as covariates

## Results

- SA at T1 did not have a significant effect on SE at T2 ( $\beta=-.157$ ,  $p=.231$ )
- IS at T1 significantly predicted SE at T2 ( $\beta=.204$ ,  $p=.013$ ); however, the effect disappeared once age and gender were added ( $\beta=.136$ ,  $p=.099$ ).
- Age ( $\beta=-.162$ ,  $p<.001$ ) and gender ( $\beta=-.113$ ,  $p=.005$ ) significantly predicted SE at T2
- The relationship between SA and SE was not moderated by level of IS ( $\beta=-.136$ ,  $p=.288$ )



## Conclusion

### Discussion

- Similar to past research<sup>9</sup>, we found increasing trajectories of SE
- Main effects of IS and SA on SE were not significant
- Age and gender were strong predictors of later levels of self-esteem<sup>9</sup>
- Relationship between SA and SE was not moderated by IS

### Future Directions

- Examine IS, SA, and SE across multiple developmental stages with more frequent assessments
- Examine gender differences in developmental trajectories of SE<sup>10</sup>

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