Paper read at Eating Disorders Alpbach 2012, Health Promotion and Prevention in Eating Disorders and Obesity, The 20th International Conference, October 18-20, 2012
Social anxiety in physical activity participation in eating disorders: a controlled explorative study

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2012
Content

- Background
- Research aims
- Methodology
- Results / Conclusion
- Relevance for clinical practice, future research
Background

‘Physical activity and social anxiety’

- mental health problems in general
- eating disorders
I. Background: general

Physical and Mental Health

The well-known positive vicious circle of PA and Health

Schmitz et al., 2004; Vancampfort et al., 2011, Vancampfort et al., 2012a
I. Background: general

The well-known negative vicious circle of PA and Health

- Mental illness
- General social fear
- Low self-confidence
- Lack of motivation
- Movement phobia
- Medication
- Weight gain

Knapen et al., 2003; 2005; Ussher et al., 2007; Vancampfort et al., 2012b
I. Background: general

The well-known negative vicious circle of PA and Health

Barriers

- Mental illness
- General social fear
- Low self-confidence
- Lack of motivation
- Movement phobia
- Medication
- Weight gain

Knapen et al., 2003; 2005; Ussher et al., 2007; Vancampfort et al., 2012b
I. Background: general

The well-known negative vicious circle of PA and Health

Barriers

General social fear

Social anxiety in exercise situations

(specific anxiety construct)

Knapen et al., 2003; 2005; Ussher et al., 2007; Vancampfort et al., 2012b
I. Background: eating disorders

- **Social anxiety** has been related to:
  
  - Low self-esteem *(T. Karatzias et al., 2010)*
  
  - Disturbed body image *(Levinson et al., 2012)*
  
  - Social physique anxiety *(Koskina et al., 2011)*

- **Social anxiety in group physical activities** is an unexplored concept in eating disorders
I. Background: definition

Social anxiety in physical activity participation

- ‘the fear of negative evaluation; that might arise in sporting activities, recreational activities, and when exercising or working out’

- Physical Activity and Sport Anxiety Scale (PASAS)

Norton et al., 2004
I. Background: PASAS challenges

- Few studies about social anxiety in PA participation
- PASAS only been validated in mentally healthy people
- PASAS only available in an English form
II. Research aims

- to measure the level of social anxiety in PA participation in group of persons with an eating disorder compared to healthy control subjects

- to explore the relationship of social anxiety in PA participation with body image and self-esteem in both groups
III. Methodology

**Subjects**

a) Patient group
- N = 40 (90% ♀)
- Inclusion: ♀ + ♂, 18 - 65 Y, AN, BN, inpatient treatment
- Exclusion criteria: acute illness, stay crisis intervention

b) Control group
- N = 40 (90% ♀)
- Inclusion: ♀ + ♂, 18 - 65 Y, age and gender matched
- Exclusion: eating disorder in the past
III. Methodology

**Measures**

1. **Physical Activity and Sport Anxiety Scale (PASAS)**
   Social anxiety in PA participation

2. **Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale (RSES)**
   Global self-esteem

3. **The Body Attitude Test (BAT)**
   Subjective body experience
III. Methodology

Statistical Analysis

♦ Kolmogorov-Smirnov normality test
♦ Cronbach’s alpha (reliability)
♦ Descriptive statistics: unpaired t-tests
♦ Analysis of variance (ANOVA) and Scheffé’s test (post hoc analysis)
♦ Pearson's product moment correlation
IV. Results & Conclusion

- PASAS- NL is a reliable questionnaire to assess the experience of social anxiety in PA participation in persons with an eating disorder (Cronbach’s alpha > 0.85)

- The patient group scored higher on the PASAS compared to HC group (p < 0.05)

- Within both groups women reported higher levels of SA compared to men (* 90 % were females)

- For both groups moderate associations were found between the PASAS, the BAT and RSES (r: 0.40-0.60)
V. Relevance for clinical practice

Take home message

• Health professionals should consider SA when trying to improve outcome and adherence of persons with an eating disorder to PA interventions.

• The Physical Activity and Sport Anxiety Scale might be a useful evaluation tool for psychomotor therapists to screen for individuals with social anxiety in PA settings.
Limitations & future research

- Cross-sectional; no causal relationships
- Bias related to selection, memory, social desirability
- The absence of an objective measure of physical activity
- No analyses of patients in diagnosis-related subgroups (AN, BN), due to small sample
Thank you for your attention


References


References