

Critical evaluation for a research project in psychology



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The study I evaluated was called "Elevated Social Anxiety among Early Maturing Girls", it demonstrates how early pubertal maturation leads to a higher risk for social anxiety, not only in boys but also in girls. The participants used in this study were 138 adolescents, 68 of which were girls and 70 which were boys. These adolescents were chosen out of a community that took part in the study. Of these 138 participants 13 percent were early developers, 72 percent were on time, and 15 percent were categorized as late developers. The ethnicities and races of this group were Hispanic/Latino, Caucasian, African American, Native American, Asian, and other. The majority of people tended to be Caucasian. Not only were the participants chosen on their ethnicities but they were also selected by the level of education of their biological parents, the annual income, and also the relationship status of their parents.

There was also a physical evaluation that tested for chronic breathing problems such as asthma, heart problems, pregnancy, and also whether they have a history of panic disorders. The measures taken for this study were the pubertal timing which was the literal test of when the participants went through puberty and they were asked to point to a picture that best portrayed their body type. The social anxiety was also measured; it was measured on whether they get embarrassed easily and also if they are afraid to make a fool out of themselves in front of others. This index helped the researchers determine whether or not the child was already socially anxious.

Covariates, such as chronological age, race, ethnicity, level of depression, and overall level of anxiety were chosen. The procedures for this study were approved by a board at the university. The adolescents and parents that

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were interested contacted the laboratory and were fully informed about the study. This study that was conducted was ethical. The participants were informed and agreed to do it because it was their choice to participate so if they wanted to then they agreed to it. The participants weren't bribed and they were filled in on what they would be doing. I think this sample size was not adequate because 138 adolescents is not enough, there are so many more people in the world that are going through puberty at different times so 138 people is not enough.

These results I don't think can generalize the population because there are about 3 billion adolescents in the world and 138 of them are not enough to generalize with the rest of the population. This topic is important and relevant to modern life because the amount of adolescents in the United States that are being diagnosed with anxiety is increasing, even the age of the children getting diagnosed is getting younger. With this information from this article we can try and find the causes for anxiety and maybe reduce the risk of adolescents that are being diagnosed with it and if we can't find the causes we can try to at least help them cope with their struggles. I think the experimenters should have used a larger amount of adolescents because it's hard to generalize with the population. I think the method for obtaining the data was adequate but I feel as if the study should have been followed up with after a few years. If the study was followed up then we can see if the anxiety levels of these adolescents increased or decreased after they went through puberty. I don't think there is any other way these results could have been interpreted because there was no third party that could have conflicted with the results.

I think another study should be done on the environment that the adolescents live in because there could be peer pressure or other environmental aspects that could increase or decrease the level of anxiety of stress. A second study could be done on the amount of extracurricular activities the adolescent does because they could be feeling peer pressure or stress from that situation also. A third study that can be done is the type of anxiety, whether it is social or general. Reference Babson, K., Blumenthal, H., Frala, J., Leen-Feldner, E., Gahr, J., Trainor, C. (2011).

Elevated Social Anxiety among Early Maturing Girls. *Developmental Psychology* 47, 1133-1140.