

# ANXIETY IN CHILDREN IN PEDIATRIC CARE

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## Background

Since the majority of studies in the field of pediatric psychology report that children suffering from different health problems are in greater risk for decreased psychosocial functioning, the aim of this study was to examine anxiety symptomatology with regard to symptom clusters according to DSM-IV criteria in three groups of pediatric patients (children with headaches, children with asthma, children with type 1 diabetes) and healthy controls.

## Method

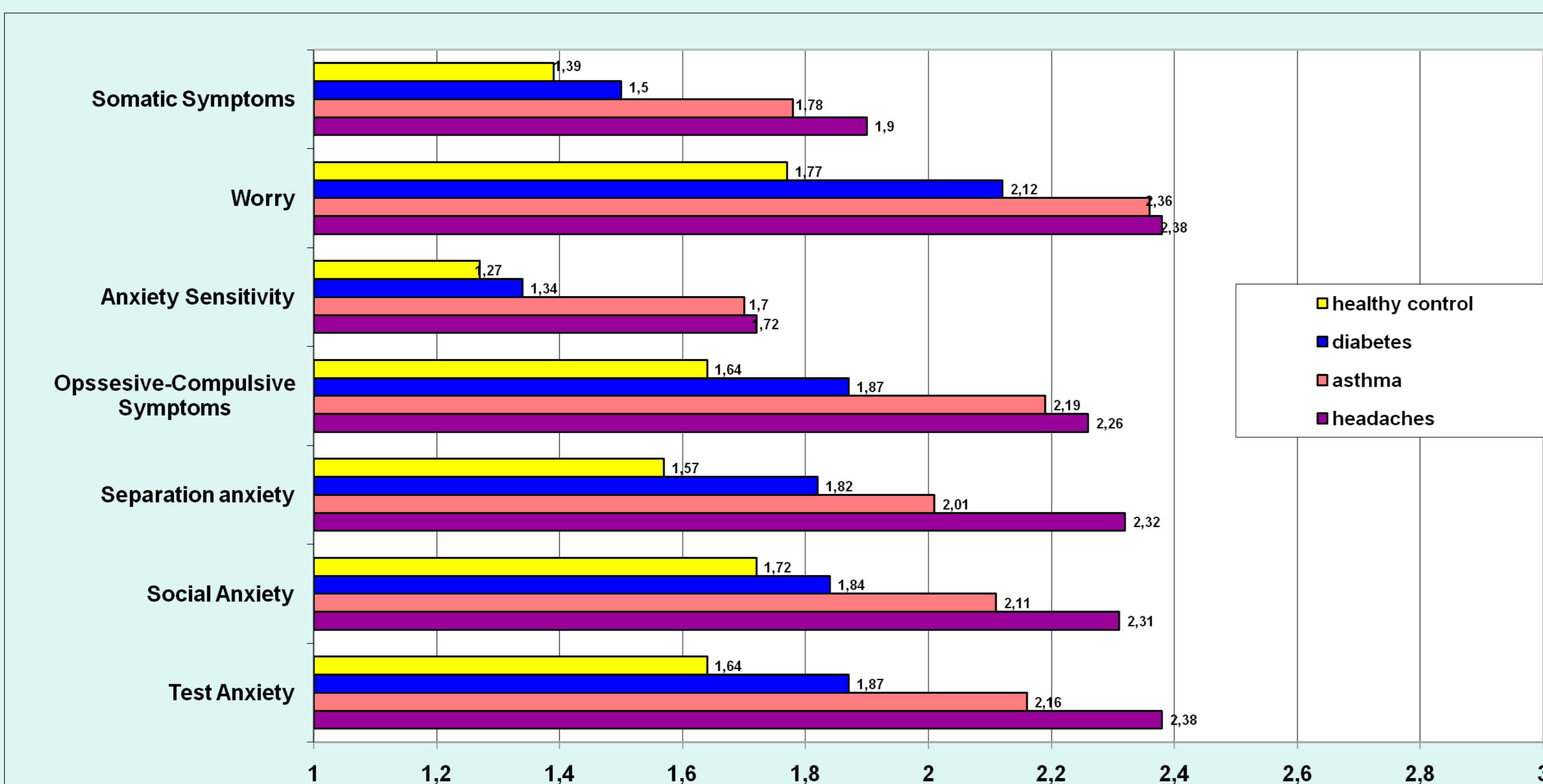
The sample consisted of 194 schoolchildren: **48 children with headaches, 56 children with asthma, 48 children with diabetes and 42 healthy children.** One questionnaire was used: *The Fear and Anxiety Scale* containing 61 items, categorized in 7 subscales which included separation anxiety, social anxiety, test anxiety, obsessive-compulsive symptoms, worry, anxiety sensitivity/panic attacks/agoraphobia, somatic symptoms and total score is the measure of general anxiety symptoms. Items are endorsed on a 1 to 5 point scale of symptom severity. Internal consistency is ranged from 0.67 to 0.87.

### Main psychometrics of the instrument used in this research

MEASURE	NO. OF ITEMS	RANGE	M	SD	CRONBACH ALFA
Test Anxiety	11	11-55	26,07	9,25	0,868
Social Anxiety	10	10-49	23,0	7,53	0,817
Separation Anxiety	11	11-53	23,2	7,87	0,812
Obsessive- compulsive symptoms	8	8-40	18,9	5,50	0,674
Anxiety sensitivity	12	12-60	20,6	6,97	0,801
Worry	9	9-45	24,3	8,22	0,863
Somatization symptoms	15	15-72	28,6	9,10	0,828
Anxiety (total score)	61	61-275	136,3	36,02	0,946

## Results

### Anxiety symptoms in children with headaches, children with asthma, children with diabetes and healthy controls



No significant differences were found on any of the anxiety scales between subjects with asthma and headaches. Compared with healthy controls children with asthma and headaches report more problems in all anxiety scales. Significant differences between children with diabetes and healthy controls were found only on Worry scale.

Analysis of anxiety symptom clusters suggest that children with headaches suffer from the most anxiety problems: they score highly on majority anxiety scales (*Worry, Test anxiety, Obsessive-Compulsive Symptoms, Social and Separation Anxiety*). Contrary to that, amongst all the aspects of anxiety symptomatology, children with asthma and diabetes most highly reported the worry symptoms. Lowest scores on all samples are on Anxiety sensitivity and Somatic Symptoms.

## Conclusion

The findings of the present study suggest that identification of the different aspects of anxiety symptom clusters is of great importance for prevention and treatment of anxiety disorders in children with different health problems. Identifying symptoms related to anxiety disorders in children in pediatric care as well as helping them with the expression and control of those feelings could have positive effects on the effectiveness of their medical treatment.

This research is part of the scientific project co-financed by Croatian Ministry of Science, Education and Sport (269-0092660-1430)

### PSYCHOSOCIAL ASPECTS OF HEALTH IN CHILDREN AND ADOLESCENTS

More information about this and other researches can be found on the web site

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