

## **IADS 2011**

### **Anxiety and Related Disorders in Childhood**

Dr. R.J.L. Lindauer

#### **Summary**

Anxiety disorders are among the most common category of psychiatric disorders in youth. The prevalence estimates suggest a significant impact of anxiety disorders over the lifespan.

DSM-IV recognizes many anxiety syndromes, each associated with abnormal fear and anxiety. This raises the question to which the distinct anxiety disorders in DSM-IV represent truly distinct clinical entities, as opposed to minor variations on a core syndrome. General features of anxiety in youth are cognitive distortions, somatic symptoms, and emotional disfunctioning. Furthermore, children with anxiety disorders have been found to experience a variety of difficulties in academic achievement, social and peer relations, and future emotional and mental health.

A number of risk factors may predispose a child to developing an anxiety disorder: biological, psychological factors, family and peer influences, and historical factors. The most common approach to understanding the development and maintenance of anxiety disorders in youth is the transactional model: interactions of vulnerabilities of the child and environmental risk factors.

For anxiety disorders in children, cognitive behavioral approaches have undergone the greatest amount of empirical evaluation. The focus of recent research with children with anxiety disorders has been on SSRIs.