

Social Anxiety Disorder: do we need subtypes or specifiers?

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Social anxiety disorder is a highly prevalent disorder in the community as well as in the clinic, and despite the large body of research now available, little is known about what causes this disorder. One of the reasons for this may be that it is such a heterogeneous disorder. Therefore, attempts have been made to define subtypes or specifiers for social anxiety disorder, such as the generalized type. Unfortunately, this poorly defined subtype, which focuses on quantity of situations feared and avoided rather than on content issues, has not helped the research on etiology of social anxiety disorder. In this presentation, research into subtypes of social anxiety disorder, and their etiology, is reviewed, and new directions for specifying or subtyping social anxiety disorder are proposed, and their clinical and research merits discussed.