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# Biomarkers for Alzheimer's Disease and Signs of Anxiety

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## Abstract

Alzheimer's Disease (AD) and associated dementias have anxiety as a risk factor and prodromal symptom, although the underlying neurobiological underpinnings are yet unknown. The purpose of this systematic review and meta-analysis was to investigate the relationship between anxiety symptoms and amyloid-beta (A) and tau, two key indicators of AD neuropathology. Five databases were searched systematically for relevant literature. Studies examining the association between anxiety and tau and/or A neuropathology in cognitively healthy adults were included. Whenever possible, random-effects meta-analyses were used to integrate effect sizes across trials, individually for tau and A. Sensitivity studies were carried out to determine whether the results varied depending on the kind of anxiety (i.e., state and trait anxiety) and the modality used to measure the biomarkers (i.e., positron emission tomography and cerebrospinal fluid).

**Keywords:** Anxiety • Amyloid • Tau • Alzheimer's disease • Dementia • Neuropathology

## Objective

By 2050, it is anticipated that the prevalence of dementia, of which Alzheimer's Disease (AD) is the most prevalent late-life type, would have tripled worldwide. Understanding modifiable dementia risk factors and underlying neurobiological correlates is crucial in tackling the anticipated rise in dementia cases because there are currently no effective treatment options. Of all mental health disorders, anxiety disorders have been found to be the most common. According to epidemiological studies, up to 33.7% of people in the West will have an anxiety disorder at some point in their lives, with subclinical anxiety symptoms believed to be twice as common as the full syndrome. Although anxiety is widespread in all stages of dementia, recent research suggests that it may also be a risk factor for developing dementia.

It is uncertain whether anxiety is a prodromal symptom or a risk factor for dementia. To enhance scientific knowledge of the connection between anxiety and dementia, however, it is essential to elucidate underlying neurological connections. Although this is a young field of study, conflicting results have been reported (for example, relationships between anxiety symptoms and AD neuropathology that are positive, negative, or absent). In order to address the confusion and clarify the connection between anxiety and AD neuropathology, a meta-analytic method is essential in this situation. Therefore, the current study's objective was to conduct a systematic review and meta-analysis to investigate the relationship between anxiety and two key amyloid-beta (A) and tau markers of AD neuropathology.

Terms associated with anxiety as well as those associated with A and tau were integrated for the database searches. Each database's search phrases were slightly modified to take into account the demands of various search engines, and in databases that permitted it, suitable MeSH terms were added to enhance the current search methodology. There were no restrictions on the date of publication, and animal studies were eliminated in accordance with Cochrane standards.

Screening was made easier with the help of Covidence. To find pertinent publications, two reviewers independently reviewed titles, abstracts, and complete texts against eligibility criteria. Discussions with a third reviewer helped to settle disputes in certain cases.

Studies were chosen if they met the following criteria: (i) they were cross-sectional (or, if longitudinal, included baseline analyses), (ii) they reported information on cognitively healthy adults with a mean age over 18 years, (iii) they assessed anxiety using a self-report symptom questionnaire or by using established clinical criteria (such as the International Classification of Diseases) for generalized anxiety disorder, (iv) they included an in vivo (such as positron emission tom. Studies that only included an informant-based assessment of anxiety (such as the Neuropsychiatric Inventory Questionnaire) or that primarily focused on participants with a significant medical or psychiatric disorder that was not generalized anxiety disorder were excluded. In cases where papers couldn't be found or further information was needed, the authors of the relevant research were contacted.

The following information was extracted from eligible studies using a standard form: (i) authors and year of publication; (ii) study sample characteristics; (iii) anxiety measurement; (iv) type and measurement of AD biomarkers; and (v) information needed for meta-analysis (such as correlation coefficients and sample sizes). Data were separately extracted by two reviewers, and any differences were addressed by a third reviewer after comparing the data extraction forms.

All studies used standardized self-report symptom measures to measure anxiety. Across research, eight different scales were used, with the State and Trait Anxiety Inventory being the most frequently used (k = 8; 29.6%). While the remaining studies analyzed only one form of anxiety, five (18.5%) examined both trait and state anxiety. Across investigations, the prevalence of self-reported anxiety was generally low (Supplementary Table 3). No research reported including participants with a clinical diagnosis of anxiety, while 14 studies (51.9%) specifically excluded participants with this condition. To assess the percentage of participants with anxiety symptoms who crossed the clinical threshold, nine research (33.3%) used known cut-off scores (median: 6.0%; range: 0.0% to 13.7%).

Although anxiety has been linked to a higher incidence of AD dementia, vascular dementia and all-cause dementia have shown greater and more persistent relationships. Beyond A and tau, AD dementia sometimes contains a complicated constellation of diseases. Taking into account our results in a broader perspective, it is likely that mechanisms other than an A or tau pathway are responsible for the link between anxiety symptoms and an elevated risk of dementia (including, indirectly, AD dementia).

The link between anxiety and AD dementia has been explained by a variety of possible etiologies. One putative biological mechanism that may be at play is the Hypothalamic-Pituitary-Adrenal (HPA) axis. Dysregulation of the HPA axis has been linked to anxiety disorders, and an over secretion of glucocorticoids is a clear result of this disruption. Increased glucocorticoids may make people more susceptible to dementia

by accelerating degenerative processes such hippocampus shrinkage. Furthermore, it is well recognized that high glucocorticoid levels raise the risk of cardiovascular and cerebrovascular conditions, which are in turn risk factors for Alzheimer's disease and vascular dementia. Another potential biological cause is inflammation. There is accumulating evidence that inflammation has a role in the pathophysiology of anxiety, especially early on in the AD continuum, before the buildup of A plaques. Systemic and intestinal inflammation have also been linked to the pathogenesis of anxiety. Another theory is that anxiety increases the chance of developing dementia by decreasing cognitive reserve (i.e., adaptability that explains how different aspects of cognitive function or daily functioning are affected differently by brain age, illness, or trauma). Indeed, older persons with clinically relevant anxiety symptoms have been found to have lower levels of cognitive reserve than those without these symptoms.

There were no correlations between anxiety symptoms and CSF t-tau or p-tau181 levels in three separate cohorts. Analyses that only included participants who reported anxiety symptoms above a cutoff suggesting a clinical level of anxiety (i.e., GAI 10 or GAI-short form 2) had the same results. Additionally, no correlations between anxiety symptoms and regional tau-PET standardised uptake value ratios (i.e., Braak stages I, III, and IV and the entorhinal cortex and inferior temporal cortex) were seen in two investigations that used the same cohort.

## Conclusion

Conclusion: In cognitively healthy people, our meta-analytic syntheses of existing data showed no relationships between anxiety and AD neuropathology (i.e., A and tau). However, there may be a complex relationship between anxiety and dementia-related neurobiological correlates that goes beyond AD neuropathology and is supported by a number of other factors. Investigating the impact of many variables (such as the severity, chronicity, and timing of anxiety symptoms) that may act as mediators between anxiety and AD neuropathology will require large, life-course studies with thorough assessments. It is crucial for public health that we increase our knowledge of the neuropathological factors that connect anxiety and dementia since doing so could lead to the development of fresh ideas for preserving cognitive function as we age.

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# High Fiber's Function and Significance in India's Fight Against Diabetes

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## Abstract

Obesity, diabetes, and pre-diabetes are a triple threat in India. Type 2 Diabetes Mellitus (T2DM) has been associated with the initiation and development of unhealthy eating patterns and physical inactivity. Despite dietary advice, people frequently consume too little or the wrong kind of Dietary Fiber (DF), which needs to be corrected. An expert panel made an effort to examine, summarize, and report on the role and significance of high DF in the management of T2DM as well as provide helpful advice on include high fiber in a regular diet. To guarantee diversity among the members in terms of professional interest and cultural background, twelve diabetologists and two highly qualified dietitians from India were chosen.

Medical Nutrition Therapy (MNT) is a useful strategy and a crucial part of T2DM care, according to evidence. Studies have demonstrated the multi-systemic health advantages of Fiber-Rich Diabetes Nutrition (FDN), including improvements in glycemic control, decreased glucose spikes, decreased hyperinsulinemia, increased plasma lipid concentrations, and weight management in T2DM patients.

**Keywords:** Diabetes • India • High fiber's function

## Introduction

India, which has the second-highest diabetes prevalence in the world, greatly contributes to the worldwide diabetes epidemic. By 2045, the prevalence is predicted to rise from 425 million to 629 million. Similar trends imply that pre-diabetes and obesity are becoming more prevalent in India. Consumption of sugar and other sweets is still widespread in India and is deeply ingrained in its customs. The prevalence of diabetes is rising quickly in India, which may be caused by significant genetic factors along with urbanization and lifestyle changes that increase insulin resistance. The "Asian Indian Phenotype"—characterized by greater rates of central obesity and more visceral fat—might be the main cause of insulin resistance. Rapid nutritional habits change and dietary patterns shift throughout the country.

The cornerstone of diabetes prevention and management is intensive lifestyle interventions. Prospective studies, including the Look Ahead trial, the Indian Diabetes Prevention Program, and the Diabetes Prevention Program, have demonstrated that adopting lifestyle modification techniques that involve altering eating habits or upping physical activity will delay the advancement of pre-diabetes to diabetes. Current T2DM clinical practice guidelines from the American Diabetic Association (ADA), Research Society for the Study of Diabetes in India (RSSDI), and Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) emphasize the importance of MNT as a first-line therapy and offer consistent dietary advice for daily nutritional requirements.

For all persons with diabetes or prediabetes, the main objective of MNT is to achieve and maintain customized glycemic objectives, lipid and weight management goals, and postpone or avoid cardiovascular risk factors. DF is a crucial part of the overall plan to reach MNT objectives, and FDN is advised for efficient diabetes control.

This consensus aims to provide practical guidance for DF intake in India in T2DM & associated conditions by critically analyzing current recommendations, evidence, and requirements. Based on their knowledge of nutrition and diabetes, 12 prominent diabetologists/endocrinologists and two knowledgeable dietitians were selected from throughout India. To create this paper, these experts took part in the Decode Fiber consensus meeting. All prospective participants were given access to a pre-draft paper well in advance of the summit to provide feedback and recommendations. In the consensus meeting, information from current regulations and pertinent literatures was presented for discussion. Following the meeting, suggestions from the attendees were taken into consideration, and the draft manuscript was sent to the experts for review and any revisions required prior to publication.

Different countries have different definitions of DF. Others attempt to define fiber on the basis of physiological principles, while some definitions are based on analytical techniques for isolating fiber. Historically, dietary fiber has been defined as edible plant components or other carbohydrates that are difficult to digest and absorb in the small intestine. Additionally, fiber characteristics like viscosity and ferment ability may be more significant qualities in terms of physiological advantages.

Since a few years ago, dietary fiber supplementation has been shown to benefit cardiovascular health. Numerous dietary factors have been shown to be beneficially related to CVD risk factors. Dietary fiber is one such element. Oats, a cereal high in fiber, have also been discovered to help hypertensive patients control their blood pressure. A multicenter and population-based study called the SWAN trial discovered that consuming more dietary fiber from grains on a regular basis helped midlife women's risk of hypertension.

In individuals with T2DM and an established cardiovascular problem, the RSSDI advises eating a fiber-rich, cardio-protective diet. Patients with T2DM receiving MNT and anti-diabetic medications reported lower rates of micro-albuminuria (5.3% vs. 8.8%, p0.01), chronic heart failure (2.7% vs. 4.6%, p0.01), and intermittent claudication (3.3% vs. 5.3%, p0.01) than those receiving anti-diabetic medications alone. When 1430 participants received a median dose of 8.7 g fiber/day for more than 7 weeks, a systematic review and meta-analysis showed a slight but substantial reduction in both Systolic Blood Pressure (SBP) and Diastolic Blood Pressure (DBP).

A Registered Dietitian (RD) or other nutrition professional provides counseling and suggestions for food intake and nutrition objectives as part of MNT, an efficient strategy that helps T2DM patients get the most out of their care. It is a multifaceted process that involves adjusting diet plans based on the person's metabolic pathophysiology (prediabetes, early-onset T2DM, or T2DM with short- or long-term duration), in order to provide enough calories and nutrients while taking into account the person's eating habits and culinary preferences. It is advised that the diabetic person be advised to follow a diet that includes high DF (25 gm/day–40 gm/day) in addition to the necessary nutrients in order to reach and maintain a desirable

body weight. People with T2DM should be encouraged to choose FDN by increasing their intake of fiber-rich foods such high-fiber cereals, veggies, etc. or by using fiber supplements as necessary.

In our society, skipping breakfast, eating often, or snacking on high-calorie, low-fiber items between meals is becoming more and more popular. According to studies, the majority of diabetics do not receive official diabetes education or nutrition counseling. Therefore, despite the fact that there are numerous DF recommendations, people may not consume enough or the right kind of fiber. In the early stages of T2DM, reducing glycemic peaks may be a crucial goal to help slow the disease's ongoing loss of -cell function and enhance overall results. It is necessary to create individualized diet regimens with nutritious food options. These strategies can entail substituting one or two meals each day, or even all of them, with a nutritious.

## Conclusion

There isn't a "one-size-fits-all" eating strategy (taking DF into account) for the management or prevention of diabetes. This is because each person with diabetes or prediabetes has a different cultural background, personal preferences, cooking habits, socioeconomic situation, and distinctive gut microbial profile. Standardization was so unsuccessful. This consensus document's main objective is to provide in-depth information about the role that high DF plays in the management of T2DM and related diseases. However, some questions remain unanswered as a result of insufficient evidence. For instance, suggestions for adding DF before, during, right after, or a few hours after a meal; modifications to food if DF is introduced during cooking.

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# Inflammatory Bowel Illness and Anxiety are both Associated with a Bidirectional Risk

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## Abstract

Although anxiety and depression are linked to Inflammatory Bowel Disease (IBD), the extent and direction of the risk are not unknown. Using population representative data, this study estimates the risk of anxiety or depression following an IBD diagnosis as well as the risk of IBD in people who already have anxiety or depression.

MEDLINE and Embase were used to conduct a systematic literature search, and we included cohort studies from unselected studies reporting the risk of anxiety or depression in patients with IBD or the risk of IBD in patients with anxiety or depression. We performed subgroup meta-analysis using the Random Effect Model to determine risk by IBD subtype and IBD with pediatric onset, and we calculated pooled Hazard Ratios (HR) for anxiety and depression in IBD. There were nine studies altogether, seven of which looked at the prevalence of anxiety or depression among more than 150,000 IBD patients. Following an IBD diagnosis, meta-analysis revealed an elevated risk of both anxiety (HR: 1.48, 95% CI: 1.29-1.70) and depression (HR: 1.55, 95% CI: 1.35-1.78). IBD risk was found to be two times higher in two trials involving over 400,000 people who had depression.

**Keywords:** Epidemiology • Depression anxiety • Inflammatory bowel disease • Gut-brain axis

## Introduction

The chronic, relapsing intestinal disorders known as Inflammatory Bowel Disorders (IBD), which include Crohn's Disease (CD) and Ulcerative Colitis (UC), are typically identified in the early stages of adulthood. Chronic gastrointestinal tract inflammation causes patients to have lifelong symptoms, and both the course of the disease and the response to treatment can be unpredictable. According to a recent meta-analysis, anxiety and depression symptoms are frequently experienced by patients with IBD, with a combined prevalence of anxiety symptoms of 31.1% and depression symptoms of 25.2%. The quality of life may be negatively impacted by psychiatric comorbidities. While IBD can be challenging to treat on its own, studies indicate that patients with co-occurring anxiety and depression may be more susceptible to a severe illness course.

In patients with IBD, bidirectional signaling between the gastrointestinal system and the central nervous system through the gut-brain axis may increase the risk of developing these psychiatric comorbidities, even though anxiety and depression are common comorbidities in many chronic diseases, including heart disease and multiple sclerosis. The vagal nerve, humoral signaling via pro-inflammatory cytokines, and alterations in the gut microbiota are some of the mechanisms at work. Despite the observed co-occurrence of IBD, anxiety, and depression, it is unclear how the illnesses interact, how they occur in order, or how great a risk.

We conducted a comprehensive literature search for studies evaluating the risk of anxiety or depression in patients with IBD and, conversely, the risk of IBD in patients with anxiety or depression using PRISMA reporting guidelines. We examined Medline and Embase for all pertinent English-language articles written between 1991 and July 2022. (inflammatory bowel disease OR ulcerative colitis OR crohn disease OR IBD) AND (depression OR anxiety) were utilized as both topic headings and search phrases. All terms were looked up as both exploded subject headings and key words. All publications chosen for inclusion in the final analysis underwent a manual reference list search, along with any identified pertinent reviews. The inclusion and exclusion criteria were established before the literature search. We included published, unselected cohort studies that met the criteria of being population-based (i.e., including all patients with the disease under study in a specific geographic area over a specified calendar period) or covering more than 50,000 people (therefore deemed to be representative for the typical patient with the disease). To be able to quantify the pooled risk across all IBD patient types and not just selected groups, such as those who were sick enough to be included from a tertiary referral centre, we decided to only include unselected cohorts.

The risk of anxiety or depression in IBD patients as well as the risk of anxiety or depression in IBD patients had to be reported by studies. Studies were disqualified if the result was not stated clearly, if there was no control group that did not have IBD, anxiety, or depression, or if the cohort was chosen based on therapy or illness severity. Only the most recent study was included when it was discovered that other studies had used the same cohort, in order to prevent data duplication. Initial title and abstract screening was carried out independently by two writers (TB and RE), and any disagreements were resolved before a decision was made. We gathered information on outcomes as well as other data from each of the included trials.

The main result was an estimation of the risk of anxiety or depression in patients with IBD or anxiety or depression in patients with IBD. We made the assumption that CD and UC patients collectively represented the IBD population in studies where risk estimates for anxiety or depression were not provided for IBD overall. We then used the risk estimates provided for anxiety and depression in CD and UC, along with their respective standard errors, to calculate a pooled IBD risk estimate. The risk of anxiety or depression by illness subtype (CD and UC) and the risk of CD or UC in patients with anxiety or depression were the secondary outcomes.

The Newcastle-Ottawa Scale, a frequently used, reliable, and previously assessed instrument for evaluating the quality of non-randomized studies in meta-analyses, was used to rate the included research. Each study received a score between 0 and 9, with up to four points awarded for selection (exposed and non-exposed cohorts, determining exposure, and demonstrating that the outcome of interest was absent at the start of the study), two for comparability, and three for outcome (how it was assessed, sufficiency of follow-up time, and appropriateness of follow-up); see Supplementary Box 1 for the scoring criteria. Authors TB assigned the scores, which were then examined by RE.

We found nine studies to include in this systematic review for the bidirectional risk of anxiety and depression in IBD. Following an IBD diagnosis, anxiety and depression risk rose, according to seven population-based studies. Neither one nor any population-based cohort studies examined the risk of IBD in patients with anxiety or depression. The two trials revealed a roughly 2-fold heightened risk of IBD after depression.

A meta-analysis of six of these unselected cohort studies, which included 151,908 IBD patients and 4,869,239 control subjects, found that patients with IBD had a 1.5-fold higher incidence of anxiety and depression. There was no difference in risk between males and women, and the elevated risk was seen in both juvenile and adult populations as well as in individuals with CD and UC.

When pediatric patients were excluded from the meta-analysis, the risk of anxiety among CD patients fell. This may be due to the fact that anxiety frequently manifests in childhood or early adulthood, and the timing of the two disorders' diagnoses may be the source of this. But in UC patients, where anxiety risk was comparable in both adult and juvenile populations, we did not observe the same pattern. This supports the idea that IBD and anxiety and depression may interact, and that these illnesses may mutually exacerbate one another either directly or through overlapping disease processes.

## Conclusion

This systematic review and meta-analysis demonstrates that patients with IBD are more likely than non-IBD individuals to have anxiety and depression, and that those who experience depression may also be more likely than non-depressed people to get IBD after their depression. These findings suggest an association between depression and Inflammatory Bowel Disease (IBD), which has a number of molecular explanations involving the gut-brain axis. Future studies should concentrate on the etiology of this reciprocal association, the temporal relationship between IBD and anxiety, depression, and other psychiatric conditions in the same population, and the prevalence of psychiatric conditions over the course of an IBD patient's lifetime.

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# Neurobiology of Anxiety

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## Abstract

An organism is more likely to survive dangerous situations when it experiences anxiety and fear, which are feelings that have been conserved throughout evolution. Multiple brain regions are involved in the neural networks that control anxiety and alertness states. This complex regulatory mechanism is compromised in anxiety disorders, causing excessive or protracted anxiety or terror. There are environmental and genetic risk factors for anxiety disorders. Genetic research offers the capacity to pinpoint particular genetic variants that are causally linked to particular behaviours. Recent decades have seen the discovery of polymorphisms predisposing to neuropsychiatric diseases by Genome-Wide Association Studies (GWASs), which have suggested new neuronal pathways in the pathogenesis of these disorders. Here, we discuss current genetic investigations in rodent models of anxiety-like behaviour and human GWASs of anxiety disorders. These investigations are opening the door to a greater comprehension.

**Keywords:** Anxiety disorder • Genome-wide association study • Gene expression • Brain • Mouse model • Stress

## Objective

Fear and anxiety are common reactions to prospective or actual threats. They might increase in frequency, intensity, and duration, disrupting daily activities and resulting in pathological anxiety. The most prevalent mental disorders, with a prevalence of about 14%, are anxiety disorders, which include panic disorder, social anxiety disorder, particular phobias, and generalized anxiety disorder. They are treated with medication and/or cognitive behavioural therapy and affect women more frequently than males. There are many pharmacotherapeutic choices, including benzodiazepines, anxiolytic drugs, and Selective Serotonin Reuptake Inhibitors (SSRIs), antidepressants. However, because the molecular mechanisms underlying excessive anxiety are largely unknown, the efficacy of currently available drugs is very varied and poorly targeted. They also have negative side effects, and in the case of benzodiazepines, these side effects include. As a result, there is a clear need to comprehend the molecular underpinnings of anxiety disorders and to create improved preclinical models, which are necessary for the creation of novel, individualized treatments.

In this review, we discuss genetic research on anxiety disorders in people and anxiety-like behaviour in rodents, and we look at the conclusions drawn about the neurological underpinnings of anxiety disorders from these studies. We conclude by discussing the significance of genetic background for improved translational validity in rodent studies and advocating for the creation of more etiologically pertinent rodent models of anxiety. Epigenetics and genetics both play significant roles in anxiety disorders, although the current review does not include these or other elements that contribute to the etiology of anxiety disorders.

Anxiety and fear are adaptive reactions that have been preserved throughout evolution due to their importance for survival. Stress, especially psychosocial stress, is a risk factor for developing anxiety disorders in the environment. As a result, stress exposures serve as the foundation for the most popular animal models of anxiety disorders. Humans and rats exhibit considerable similarities in their stress response and the brain circuits underlying danger detection and anxiety responses, despite physiological and anatomical differences. Therefore, using rats as models for anxiety disorders is particularly appropriate. While animal models of anxiety disorders try to address key characteristics of the condition, the whole clinical symptomatology cannot be modelled in laboratory animals since cognitive capacities are vital in the human stress response, especially in coping with stress.

The ability to precisely manipulate the experimental settings, such as environmental exposures, and to have access to tissue samples at certain time points in animal models is one of their main advantages over human investigations. Importantly, recent developments in transgenic, optogenetic, and chemogenetic approaches provide exquisite spatiotemporal control of cell type- and circuit-specific alterations.

Studies on peripheral biomarkers, neuroimaging, and genetics are the main research areas for anxiety disorders in humans. In addition to heredity, environmental factors are significant contributors to inter-individual variability and play a significant role in the etiology of anxiety disorders. Rodent studies allow for the precise control of environmental conditions and the accessibility of brain tissue at various times. Rodent models provide resources for future research into the functional effects of genetic variants discovered by the Genome-Wide Association Study (GWAS), which in theory could result in the discovery of new therapy targets and the creation of improved treatment strategies for anxiety disorders.

Stress early in life, notably in the perinatal and childhood years, is linked to an increased risk of psychiatric problems in humans. Maternal separation and/or a lack of nesting material during the first few weeks of birth are frequently used to simulate postnatal stress in mice, which results in anxiety-like behaviour and increased vulnerability to stressors later in life. Social exclusion and a lack of social support are increasingly being recognized as risk factors for anxiety disorders in humans, and social deprivation models are becoming more and more common in animal studies. Since the first few weeks after weaning are so important for the social, cognitive, and emotional development of mice, social isolation is frequently used during this time.

When an animal is experiencing chronic mild stress, they are repeatedly exposed to mild stressors like loud noises, bright lights, and little bedding or nesting material for days or weeks at a time. Rodents exhibit anxious and depressive-like behaviours as a result of repeated restraint stress, another physical stressor. Physical encounters between an intruder and an aggressive resident animal that lead to the defeat of the intruder and the emergence of anxiety- and depressive-like behaviour are a model of chronic social defeat in psychosocial stress. Mice exhibit an early rise in social avoidance of an unknown target following social defeat stress. Not all mice exhibit avoidance behaviour; instead, they behave more like non-stressed controls, simulating individual variances in the susceptibility to stress in people. These models can be used to investigate the neurological factors underlying resilience and susceptibility to stress.

Better animal models are needed for the creation of new anti-anxiety medications. Developing etiologically sound animal models to comprehend underlying neurobiological mechanisms and measure therapy efficacy can be accomplished by identifying hereditary risk factors. Once a genetic risk mutation is identified, it is possible to research the genes it affects, the proteins it encodes, and the molecular, cellular, and circuit activities of the proteins. Alternatively, it is feasible to identify the gene regulatory networks

implicated if the variation affects a noncoding RNA molecule. Schizophrenia contains examples of mouse models created using a similar methodology.

A GWAS in 2014 discovered 108 distinct genetic loci that contribute to schizophrenia risk. The C4 gene area on chromosome 6 contains the strongest link, and it has been demonstrated that individuals with schizophrenia exhibit higher levels of C4A expression than do controls. In comparison to wild-type mice, transgenic mice overexpressing human C4A exhibit impaired social behaviour, working memory, and anxiety-like behaviour as well as reduced cortical synapse density and an increase in microglial-mediated synaptic pruning. These findings point to an overactive complement system as a pathogenetic mechanism of schizophrenia and present opportunities for the creation of novel therapeutic approaches.

Recently, using exome sequencing of a significant number of patients and controls, ultra-rare protein-truncating mutations in schizophrenia were discovered. The carriers of the found rare variants had a significant chance of developing schizophrenia, despite the fact that the odds ratios of the individual common variants discovered through a GWAS are quite modest. The risk's severity was comparable to rare Copy Number Variants (CNVs) that have been found in schizophrenic patients. There aren't any exome-sequencing studies on anxiety disorders that we are aware of. One case of anxiety disorder and none of the controls in a research looking at individuals with diverse psychiatric diseases had a CNV within SLC6A3. Other research still need to confirm this result. The construction of etiologically relevant animal models will benefit greatly by knowing whether the genetic landscape of anxiety disorders includes high risk-conferring uncommon variants and CNVs. Larger investigations in anxiety disorders are required to answer this question.

## Conclusion

Despite the significant incidence and burden of anxiety disorders, we still know very little about their origin. Although small sample sizes and consequently low statistical power to identify significant associations have historically hampered progress in anxiety disorders, recent larger-scale biobank or register-based studies have led to the identification of genetic variants predisposing to anxiety disorders. Genetic research has also revealed significant pathogenetic mechanisms in other psychiatric disorders. The significant genetic association between anxiety disorders and other mental and physical problems reflects the substantial comorbidity of anxiety disorders with these illnesses as well as with one another. There is a possibility to identify subgroups of people based on disease trajectories, comorbidities, and genomic information in large register-based studies having information on all medical diagnoses. Opportunities are presented by the identification of common and group-specific genetic variables related with anxiety.

The neurological underpinnings behind anxiety disorders must be understood through investigations in both model organisms and people. Although there is still only a small amount of overlap between mouse model gene expression studies and human GWASs, both methods have been successful in identifying the gene encoding estrogen receptor 1. 'omics experiments involving rodents and people are still uncommon, as are translational studies in which the advantages of mouse models are exploited for unbiased 'omics screens to formulate hypotheses for testing in human anxiety disorders. The translational validity of the current rat models needs to be improved by creating etiologically sound models based, for instance, on genetic data in order to achieve better concordance between rodent and human investigations.

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# Abnormalities of Anxiety and Executive Functioning

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## Abstract

Anxiety disorders, one of the most common classes of psychological disorders, have been shown to result in a decreased quality of life. Although some research suggests that anxiety disorders are linked to impairments in executive functioning, the inconsistency in the current literature yields an unclear conclusion on the relationship between the two. The current meta-analysis systematically investigated 55 records that compared various groups with anxiety disorders to healthy controls on executive function tasks. Overall, our meta-analysis showed that individuals with anxiety disorders exhibited significant deficits in performance efficiency (reaction times) on executive function tasks. However, we also found that individuals with anxiety disorders may outperform their healthy peers in performance effectiveness (task accuracy) in some conditions. Type of anxiety disorders, domain of executive functions, and mediation use were identified to moderate the overall relations between anxiety disorders and executive functioning. Nevertheless, the results were robust across important demographic and other clinical moderators (e.g., anxiety severity and comorbidity).

**Keywords:** Anxiety disorder • Executive functions • Attentional control theory • Meta-analysis

## Objective

Anxiety disorders, characterised by constant and unsubstantiated fear or worry (American Psychiatric Association, APA), are argued to be one of the most common classes of psychological disorders, with an estimated lifetime prevalence of 28.8% in the United States. The pervasiveness of anxiety disorders is worrying, given their adverse impact on one's quality of life by worsening social functioning, self-esteem, and physical health. Importantly, research suggests that anxiety disorders are associated with deficits in executive functioning a set of higher-order cognitive control processes crucial for goal achievement.

Third, varied emotional salience of task stimuli in different studies may contribute to discrepant findings. According to the attentional control theory, adverse effects of anxiety on task performance caused by task-irrelevant stimuli are greater when stimuli are threat-related rather than neutral. In support of this view, various studies have suggested that groups with anxiety disorders performed worse than controls in cognitive tasks when presented with threatening stimuli as opposed to neutral stimuli. Therefore, we sought to consider the emotional salience of the task stimuli as a moderator in the meta-analysis to investigate this proposition.

Lastly, another factor contributing to the heterogeneity in research findings might be tied to the diversity of the samples used across studies which varied in comorbidity, psychotropic medication use and/or treatment, severity of anxiety disorder, age, and gender. These demographic variables might account for variances in findings due to their differential relationships with cognitive ability. Specifically, medication use and/or treatment may have different effects on cognitive abilities depending on the type of medication. For example, the use of certain medications, such as benzodiazepines.

Taken together, these inconsistent findings underscore the need for a meta-analytic approach to illuminate the relation between anxiety disorders and impaired EF while accounting for potential moderators of this relation. To this end, we synthesized previous research findings and used meta-analytic methods to test the conflicting hypotheses about the relationship between anxiety disorders and EF. To explore the source of variance in precedent findings, we examined the potential moderating effects of methodological discrepancies (unified/diversified EF, types of measured outcomes, types of anxiety disorders tested, and emotional salience of task stimuli), as well as demographic (age and gender) and clinical (severity of anxiety disorder, use of psychotropic medication/treatment, and comorbidity) variables on effect sizes.

Based on the predictions of attentional control theory, it was hypothesized that anxiety disorders would affect RT, but not accuracy, on EF tasks that assess inhibitory control and task-switching ability. However, anxiety disorders would be less likely to affect RT or accuracy on EF tasks assessing updating ability, since those tasks do not require attentional control. Furthermore, given that the subtypes of anxiety disorders are characterized by distinct diagnoses, specific hypotheses for each type of anxiety disorder and performance on EF tasks were proposed. Generalised anxiety disorder, in particular, is characterized by persistent worry and thoughts on a variety of topics. which may serve as an internal distraction and impair attentional control. In contrast, other forms of anxiety disorders (e.g., social anxiety disorder and specific phobia) are characterized by worry and anxiety in response to specific events and stimuli. For example, individuals with social anxiety disorder have an acute dread of social evaluation, and so their anxiety relates exclusively to social stimuli or circumstances that involve a risk of being evaluated. Likewise, individuals with panic disorder are more biased towards internal and external panic-related stimuli and pay less attention to non-panic-related stimuli.

As a result, attentional control is unlikely to be impaired in individuals with anxiety disorders other than generalised anxiety disorder when they are performing neutral tasks in general situations. Consistent with attentional control theory, which states that anxiety affects processing efficiency but not performance effectiveness, it was hypothesized that generalised anxiety disorder would result in slower response time but a comparable level of accuracy on EF tasks when compared to healthy controls. Individuals suffering from social phobia, panic disorder, specific phobia, or selective mutism, on the other hand, would show no significant difference in RT and accuracy on EF tasks when compared to healthy controls.

The current meta-analysis was not pre-registered. A detailed description of the inclusion and exclusion criteria, documentation of full-text records excluded with their corresponding reasons, as well as R code used for the current meta-analysis, are publicly available on Research Box. Analyses for overall effect size estimates, as well as tests of publication bias, were conducted in R version using the meta-analytic package metaphor version with restricted maximum likelihood estimation.

The search terms were included because acute stress disorder, obsessive-compulsive disorder, and post-traumatic stress disorder have been classified as subtypes of anxiety disorders under DSM-IV, and previous studies often examined different subtypes of anxiety disorders together and compared how the subtypes of anxiety disorders differentially affect neuro-cognition in the same study Therefore, these keywords were included to ensure that studies that examined subtypes of anxiety disorders not classified under DSM-5 and subtypes of anxiety disorders classified under

DSM-5 together were incorporated in the current meta-analysis. In addition, the terms "central executive", "phonological loop" and "visuospatial sketchpad" were included because they represent the different components of working memory as proposed by Baddeley's (1992) model of working memory.

In total, seventeen records were excluded due to missing data while nineteen studies were excluded due to inaccessibility as the original authors did not respond to repeated requests. Fifty-six records were excluded because the constituent studies did not measure performance on EF tasks, twenty-seven records were excluded because the constituent studies did not examine participants with anxiety disorder or participants had an anxiety disorder that was not clinically diagnosed, twelve records were excluded because intrusive measures were used during task performance, ten records were excluded because they did not include a control group free from medication or any current or lifetime psychiatric diagnosis, four records were excluded because they included participants with non-anxiety related disorder as the primary diagnosis, four records were excluded because they involved anxiety-related interventions or manipulations but did not report baseline measures of EF, four records were excluded because they were either review articles or a letter to the editor, three records were excluded because participants in the anxiety group had comorbid disorders, two records were excluded because participants were exposed to electric shocks while working on EF tasks, two records were excluded because another version of the record (i.e., published version and English translated version) was already included in the meta-analysis, and one record was excluded because the constituent study investigated anxiety disorders in participants with brain injury. A more detailed description of the inclusion and exclusion criteria, as well as the documentation of full-text records excluded with their corresponding reasons, is publicly available on ResearchBox.

In terms of measures of EF, the means and standard deviations of scores achieved by both groups (anxiety disorders vs. control) on various tasks assessing EF were recorded whenever available. The task used (e.g., Stroop task) was recorded and categorised into one of the three main components of EF, namely inhibition, shifting, and updating. Common EF tasks used to assess inhibition the ability to suppress automatic responses to irrelevant stimuli include the Stop-signal Task.

## Conclusion

In conclusion, our results showed a nuanced relation between anxiety disorder and EF, depending on performance effectiveness and efficiency, type of anxiety disorders, the domain of EF, and mediation use. Our study is valuable in that it provides a comprehensive review of the relationship between anxiety disorders and EF, which was muddled in inconsistent findings derived from past research. Examining each anxiety disorder and its relationship with EF revealed moderated associations, providing clinicians and researchers with a guide for treatment and future research.

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