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The Social Phobia and Anxiety Inventory for Children (SPAI-C): External and Discriminative Validity

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Psychometric properties of the Social Phobia and Anxiety Inventory for Children (SPAI-C) were determined using a sample of 254 children. External validity was examined by comparing children's SPAI-C scores with (a) independent observers' ratings of skill and anxiety in social interaction and social performance tasks and (b) parental report of social anxiety. Discriminative validity was determined by examining the ability of the SPAI-C to differentiate children with social phobia from those with other anxiety disorders. Finally, race and gender differences were examined. The results indicated that SPAI-C scores for the entire sample differed by gender but not by race. However, African American children with social phobia had significantly lower scores than Caucasian children with this disorder. Regarding external validity, SPAI-C scores correlated significantly with parental reports of children's social fears and with independent observer ratings of behavioral skill. Finally, SPAI-C scores successfully differentiated children with social phobia from children with other anxiety disorders. The results are discussed in terms of the SPAI-C's external and discriminative validity and children's performance based on race and gender.

Social phobia is a persistent and severe fear that one will do or say something embarrassing or humiliating in front of others. Although social phobia was first included in the American diagnostic nomenclature in the 1980s (American Psychiatric Association, 1980), only recently has there been specific recognition that children suffer from this disorder (Beidel, 1991; Beidel

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& Turner, 1988). Furthermore, it was not until 1994, with the publication of the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders* (*DSM-IV*; APA, 1994), that specific descriptors addressing the clinical presentation of social phobia in children were included in the diagnostic schema. However, to date, there remains only minimal research into the psychopathology and treatment of this disorder in youth.

Because of the recent recognition that the disorder exists among children, previously existing and well-known self-report instruments to assess children's anxiety, such as the Revised Children's Manifest Anxiety Scale (CMAS-R; Reynolds & Richmond, 1978); State-Trait Anxiety Inventory for Children (STAIC-Trait; Spielberger, 1973); and the Fear Survey Schedule for Children-Revised (FSSC-R; Ollendick, 1983), are not entirely appropriate for the measurement of social fear. As pointed out by Beidel, Turner, and Morris (1995), these instruments assess general levels of distress and very specific fears but do not measure the specific parameters of social phobia. However, there are several instruments recently developed specifically to assess children's social fears. The Social Anxiety Scale for Children-Revised (SASC-R; LaGreca & Stone, 1993) assesses social avoidance, social distress, and fear of negative evaluation. The SASC-R has acceptable reliability and validity but it was not developed to assess the specific construct of social phobia as described in the *DSM-IV*. Currently, its ability to differentiate children with social phobia from other diagnostic groups has not been established. Using the adolescent version of the SASC-R, the Social Anxiety Scale for Adolescents (SASA), children with a primary diagnosis of specific phobia and various secondary "social evaluative anxiety disorders" (e.g., social phobia, overanxious disorder, avoidant disorder) had significantly higher scores on the SASA than children with specific phobias (Ginsburg, LaGreca, & Silverman, 1998). However, scores for a sample of children with primary social phobia have not yet been reported. The development of a valid self-report instrument for childhood social phobia is important not only to further understanding of the psychopathology of this disorder but also as a tool to help determine treatment outcome.

To address the absence of a self-report measure specifically assessing childhood social phobia, the Social Phobia and Anxiety Inventory for Children (SPAI-C; Beidel et al., 1995) was developed. The SPAI-C is a 26-item, empirically derived self-report inventory designed to assess a range of potentially anxiety-producing situations (e.g., reading aloud, attending social functions). The SPAI-C also assesses the physical and cognitive manifestations of social anxiety. Beidel et al. reported that the SPAI-C correlated significantly with scores on the STAIC-Trait scale, the five subscales of the FSSC-R (although differences among the correlations were not significant) and the internalizing (but not the externalizing) scale of the Child Behavior Checklist (CBCL). In addition, it successfully differentiated children with social phobia from those without psychiatric disorders. In a second study, Beidel, Turner, and Fink (1996) reported further construct validity. Children's SPAI-C scores

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