Body Image Satisfaction and Anxiety Trajectories during Adolescence
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BACKGROUND
- Despite considerable cross-sectional evidence linking body image satisfaction to anxiety disorder symptoms in adolescents, few studies have examined the temporal relationship between body image and anxiety.
- Sociocultural and comorbidity models of disordered eating propose that poor body image satisfaction leads to anxiety.

OBJECTIVE
To examine the associations between baseline body image satisfaction and subsequent anxiety disorder symptom trajectories in a large, diverse community sample of adolescent girls and boys.

METHODS
Participants: 581 10th and 11th grade students recruited from seven public high schools in the Mid-Atlantic region of the U.S. (58% girls; 65% non-Hispanic White; Age: M = 16.1, SD = 0.8 yrs)
Procedure: Self-report questionnaires were administered during school in the spring of 2007 (T1), 2008 (T2), and 2009 (T3).

RESULTS
Table 1. Unstandardized Parameter Estimates for Unconditional Latent Growth Curve Models of Anxiety Symptom Trajectories.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Parameter</th>
<th>GAD Mean (SD)</th>
<th>PD Mean (SD)</th>
<th>SAD Mean (SD)</th>
<th>SEP Mean (SD)</th>
<th>SSA Mean (SD)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Intercept</td>
<td>-0.24 ± 0.6</td>
<td>-0.15 ± 0.5</td>
<td>-0.26 ± 0.4</td>
<td>-0.03 ± 0.3</td>
<td>-0.03 ± 0.2</td>
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<tr>
<td>Linear Slope</td>
<td>5.4 ± 0.7</td>
<td>4.4 ± 0.2</td>
<td>2.2 ± 0.1</td>
<td>1.4 ± 0.1</td>
<td>1.4 ± 0.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Fit indices indicated that a linear slope function was a good fit for all anxiety disorder symptom trajectories (Chi-square tests ps < .001, CFI = .96-1.00, RMSEAs, RMSEs, Upper 90% CIs, and SRMRs = .000-.07). *p < .05, **p < .01

CONCLUSIONS
- Body image satisfaction was associated with lower concurrent symptoms of multiple anxiety disorder symptoms, and was uniquely predictive of decreases in SAD symptoms.
- Potential mechanisms for the body image-SAD relationship:
  - Fears of negative evaluation and social appearance anxiety
  - Cognitive biases toward weight- and shape-related stimuli
  - Neuroendocrine dysregulation in potential threat response systems
- Body image-SAD relationship may be especially robust during adolescence due to increased salience of peers and post-pubertal changes in brain structure and function.
- Future research should evaluate these relationships in other developmental periods and elucidate mechanisms.