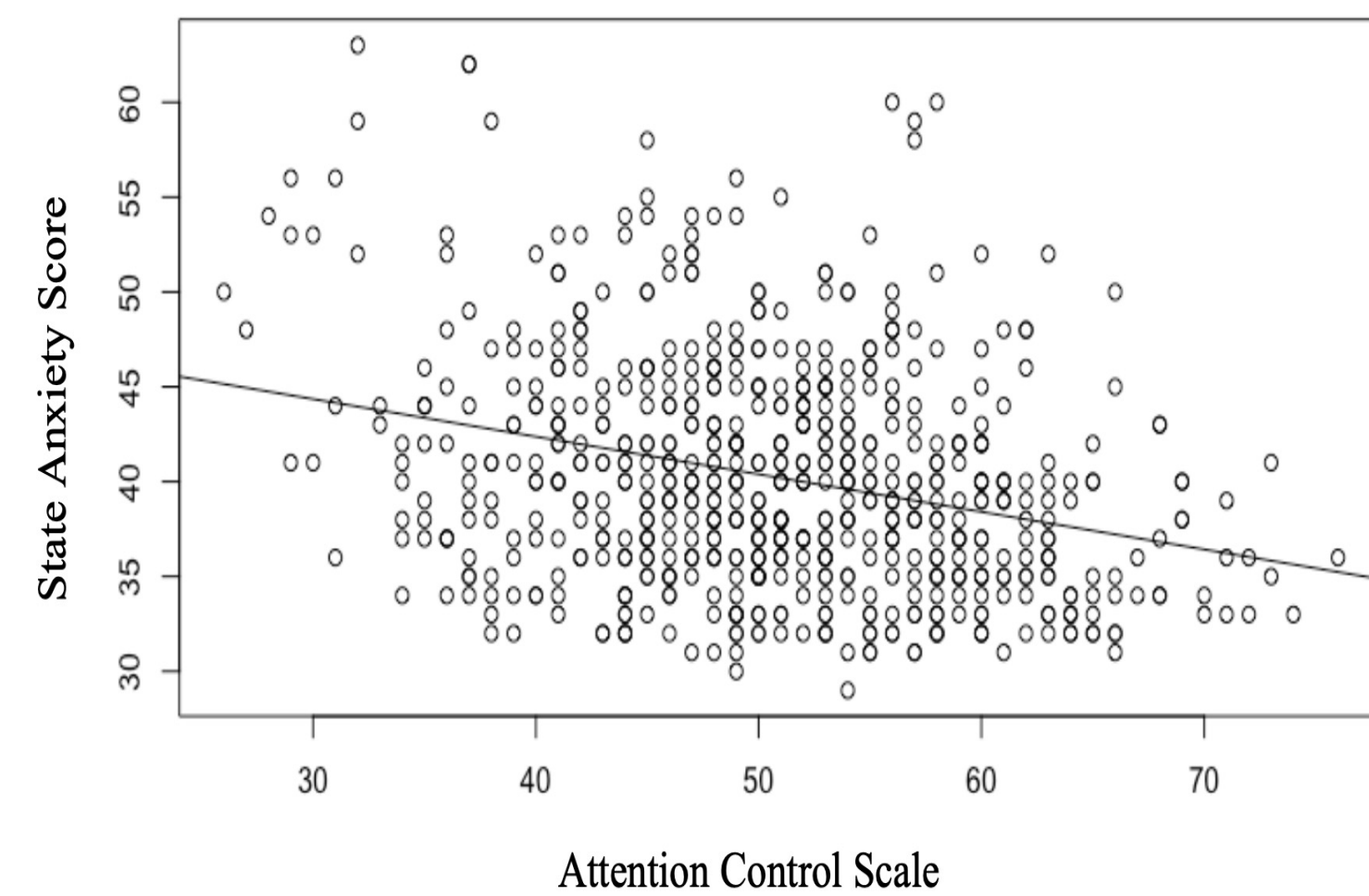# Anxiety's Attention
Correlational analysis of Attention control on trait and state anxiety

Madissen Sitka, Steven G. Greening

Introduction

- Anxiety and anxiety-disorders are highly prevalent, and are amongst the most common mental health disorders in Canada. (Stewart, P. et al. The Human Face of Mental Health and Mental Illness in Canada. (2006).) Without treatment, anxiety disorders result in severe suffering and impairment of functioning for the individual

- Eysneck (et. al., 2007) notes that there has been "broad support for the notion that anxiety disrupts the functioning of goal directed attention systems". The negative effects of anxiety on processing efficacy depends on two factors of attention control: inhibition and shifting (Eysneck et. al., 2007).

- Purpose of study: find individual differences that maintain anxiety and identify how these differences relate to an individuals cognitive processes

- We consider a possible correlational relation between two types of anxiety (trait anxiety and state anxiety) and attention control.
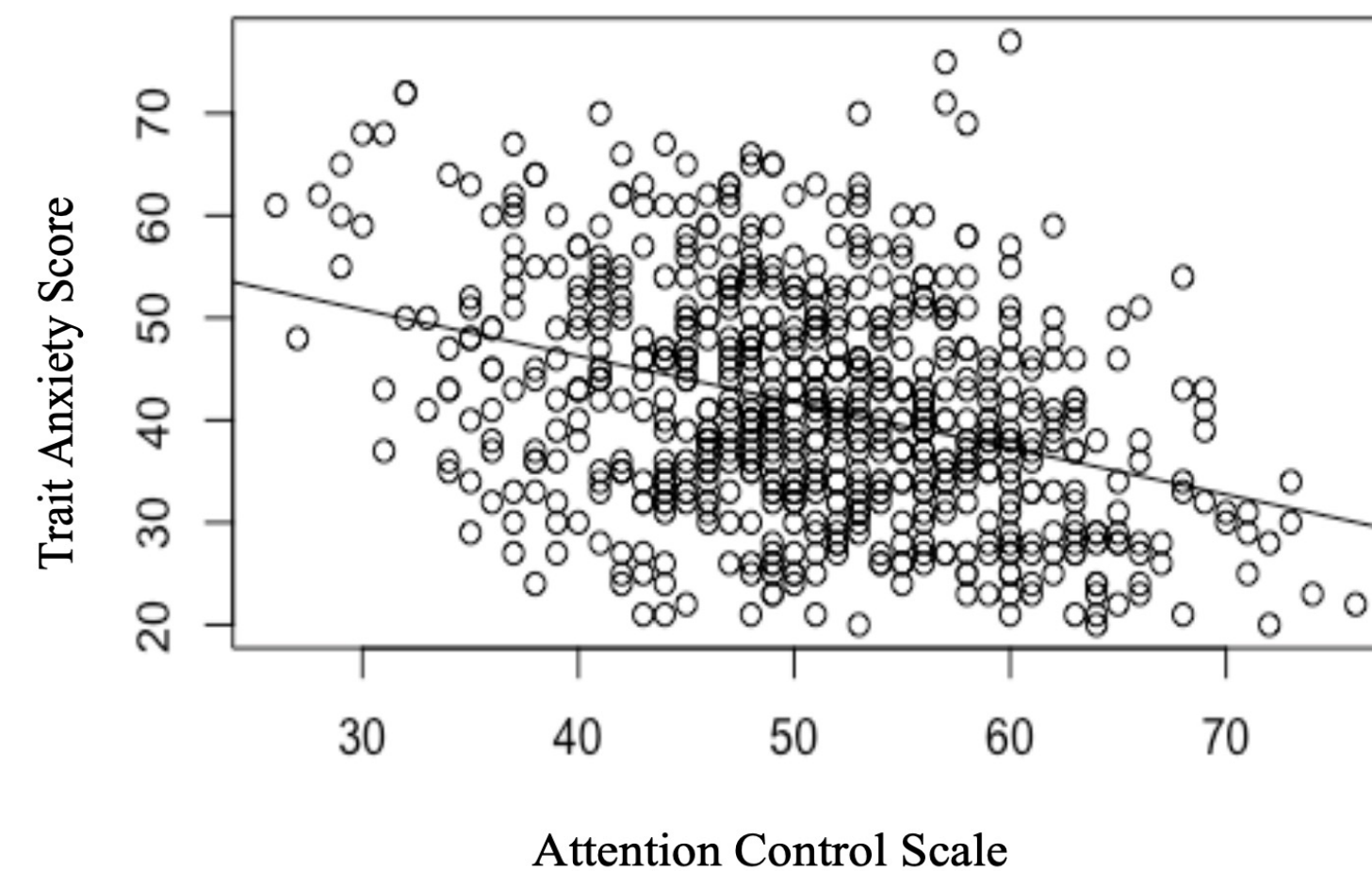
State Anxiety

How an individual feels at the particular moment in which they are completing the self-assessed questionnaire

Trait Anxiety

How the individual generally feels in everyday situations

Methods

Measurement of Attention Control

The attention control scale was used to measure attention control in participants. The attention scale is a 20 item self-report measurement on a 5 point Linkert scale. Nine items focus on attention and eleven focus on attention shifting in participants. Cronbach's alpha of 0.82 for focus and 0.71 for attention shifting (Judah. M, Grant. D, Mills. A, Lechner. W, 2014).

Measurement of Trait Anxiety

The State-Trait Anxiety Inventory Self – Questionnaire was used to measure both State Anxiety and Trait Anxiety in participants. 20 questions measure State anxiety, and 20 measure trait anxiety. Cronbach's alpha for Trait Anxiety for undergraduate males and females is 0.90 and 0.89, respectively. The State Anxiety Cronbach's alpha for both genders is 0.89 (Spielberger. C, Gorsuch. R, Lushene. R, 1970).

Participants
670 participants from an undergraduate introductory to psychology course (M= 20.43, SD= 5.4273291) participated in this study.

Exclusion Criteria
Participant data was excluded from the analysis if they failed to complete both the Trait Anxiety Score measurement and the Attention Control Scale measurement.

Correlation Between Attention Control and State Anxiety

H_o: The correlation between Attention Control and State anxiety is not significant
H_a: A significant correlation exists

Regression for Attention Control on State Anxiety Findings

A Pearson Correlations test showed a significant negative correlation between State Anxiety Score and the Attention Control scale with r = -0.2879391. Findings support the alternative hypothesis that attention control impacts trait anxiety, t(669) = -7.7769, p < 0.001. 95% CI [-0.3558716, -0.2169796]

Correlation Between Attention Control and Trait Anxiety

H_o: The correlation between Attention Control and State anxiety is not significant
H_a: A significant correlation exists

Regression for Attention Control on Trait Anxiety Findings

A Pearson Correlation test showed a significant negative correlation between trait anxiety score and attention control scale with r = -0.3515865. Findings support the null the alternative hypothesis, t(669) = -9.714, p< 0.001. 95% CI [-0.416993. -0.2834409]

Discussion

Higher self-reported attention control was associated with lower self-reported trait and state anxiety.

These results indicated either attention control is protective against anxiety, the anxiety has a detrimental effect on attention control, or some combination of both. Future research is needed to determine the nature of the relationship between attention and anxiety.

Works References
Eysenck. M, Derakshan. N, Snatos. R, Calvo. M. (2007) Anxiety and Cognitive Performance: Attention Control Theory. *American Psychological Association* 7(2), 336-353.
Judah. R, Grant. D, Mills. A., Lechner. V. (2014) Factor structure and validation of the attentional control scale. *Cognition and Emotion, 28*(3), 433-451
Spielberger. C, Gorsuch. R, Lushene. R. (1970) STAI manual for the State-Trait Anxiety Inventory. *Consulting Psychologists Press, Inc.*
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