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## Behavioral Inhibition and Anxiety

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# Behavioral Inhibition and Anxiety in Juveniles

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## Introduction:

A correlation between behavioral inhibition and anxiety or nervousness in children may have implications related to the adjustment, treatment, and education of adolescents. The BIS (Behavioral Inhibition System) gauges one's reactions to aversive motives, or the movement away from something unpleasant. We hypothesize that higher levels of anxiety or nervousness on the SCARED will positively correlate with higher scores on the BIS. This implies that children who have higher levels of inhibition are likely to be more anxious overall.

## Methods:

**Participants:** One hundred and forty four children (41% female,  $M_{age} = 10.8$ ,  $SD = 1.03$ ) were participants in the research. They completed a variety of self-report surveys about their personality, interests, thoughts, feelings, and behaviors. At this time they completed the Screen for Childhood Anxiety Related Disorders (SCARED), which assesses various anxiety-related cognitions, emotions, and behaviors. They also completed the Behavioral Inhibition System/Behavioral Activation System (BIS/BAS) questionnaire, which measures behaviors/thoughts away from something unpleasant (inhibition) and behaviors/thoughts toward something desired (activation). We will examine the relationship between scores on the SCARED and on the BIS portion of the BIS/BAS measure.

**Statistical Method:** SPSS was used to conduct a bivariate correlation of the sum scores of both the BIS test and SCARED test to determine what type of correlation there was, if any, between the two measures administered to the children. A frequency table was conducted to determine exactly how many subjects participated, age, gender, standard deviation, and which subjects produced usable data. Bar graphs, scatter plots and tables were used to portray the findings of the research.

## Results:

Approximately 86% of the sample completed both the BIS and the SCARED measures. Results for the bivariate correlation are presented in table below. ( $b = 1.92$ ,  $Wald = 56.23$ ,  $p < .001$ ).

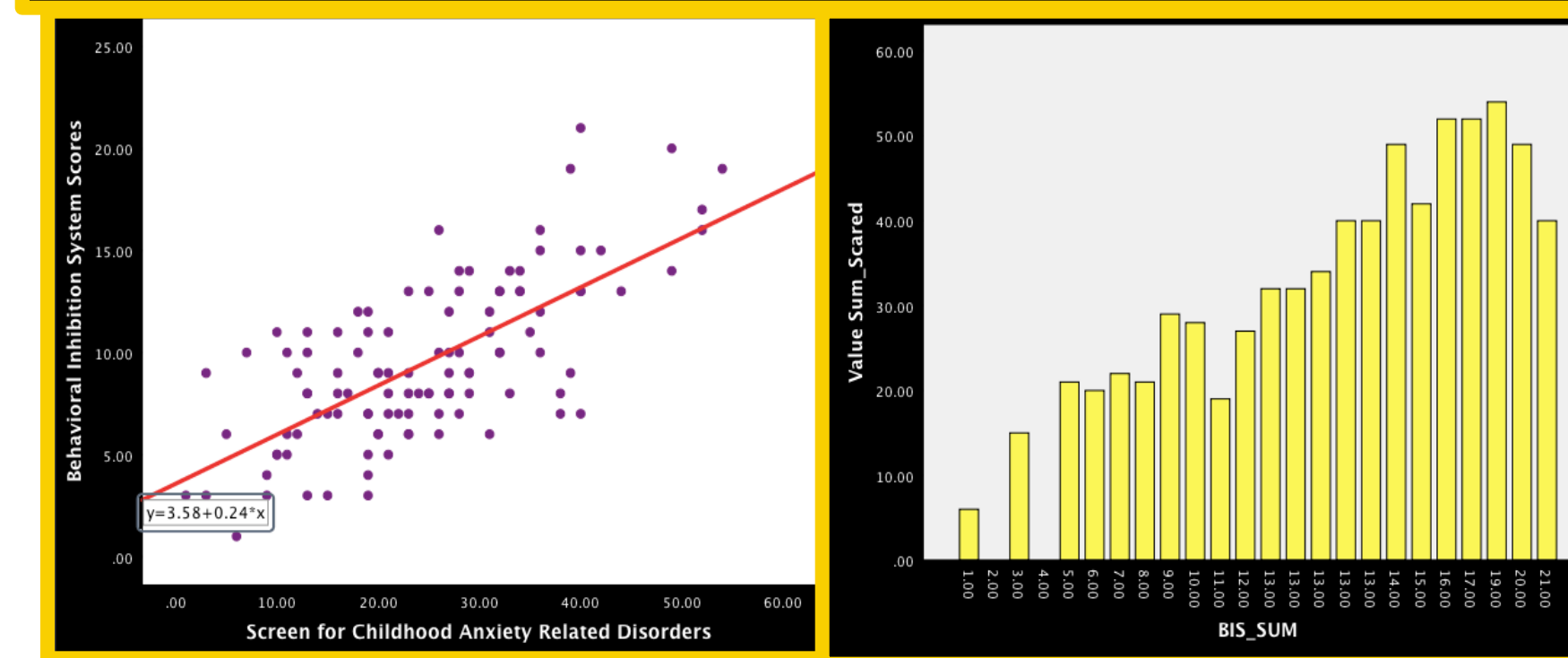


Chart 1

Chart 2

Table 1

Sum of BIS	Sum of SCARED	
	p	r
	0.01	0.697

## Discussion:

Our measure of behavioral inhibition and anxiety or nervousness [using the Behavioral Inhibition System (BIS) and the Screen for Childhood Anxiety Related Disorders (SCARED)] showed a close association with each other. Our hypothesis was affirmed.

## Discussion Cont'd:

We hypothesized that higher levels of anxiety or nervousness on the SCARED would positively correlate with higher scores on the BIS. Both chart 1 and 2 show the positive correlation between the two measures, through the upward slope.

Previous studies have examined the relationship between inhibition levels and anxiety or nervousness in adults. In comparison, both the adult and child studies show significance in the relationship between the anxiety or nervousness of an individual and his or her behavioral inhibition (avoidance).

The implications of the findings suggest that there should be adjustments in treatment and education when interacting with children who have higher levels of anxiety and inhibition. Further research should be done to develop the best ways of which to interact and successfully influence children fitting this criteria.

## References/Acknowledgement:

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