I. Introduction

- Anxiety is associated with different types of biases (e.g., Bar-Haim et al., 2007; Mogg and Bradley, 1998), including attentional and evaluation biases. Desimone & Duncan (1995) highlighted the competition between endogenous (top-down voluntary processes) and exogenous (bottom-up automatic processes) attention. Eysenck’s attentional control theory (2007) pointed out an enhanced attentional engagement towards threatening cues (shifting) and difficulties to move attention from them (inhibition) in anxiety.

- The aim of the study is to provide evidence for these dysfunctions in a non-clinical sample.

- This study uses an anti-saccade task to assess attentional processes and a decision task to assess emotional evaluation.

II. Hypothesis

- **H1:** Better performance (Reaction Time-RT, Correct Answers-CA) in pro-saccade task versus anti-saccade.

- **H2:** Anxiety (all types) alters efficiency (longer Reaction Time, RT) and effectiveness (less Correct Answers, CA) in anti-saccade task for emotional stimuli.

- **H3:** Negative interpretation (valence) of neutral stimuli and enhanced evaluation (arousal) of negative ones in anxious participants.

III. Method

**ANTI-SACCADe TASK:** measure of cognitive inhibition (control deficit) in which participants have to suppress a reflexive saccade towards a peripheral stimulus and generate a volitional saccade in the opposite direction.

**STIMULI**

- Positive stimuli: Joy, Surprise
- Negative stimuli: Anger, Disgust
- Neutral stimuli: Surprise, Neutral

IV. Results

- **H1** - Effect of the condition confirmed (F(1,67)=13.959, p<.001) = Better CA & RT in prosaccade (92.5%) than antisaccade (88.6%) condition.

- **H2** - Efficiency: Hypothesis confirmed. Effect of Trait-Anxiety (TA) for social emotional stimuli (F(2,67)=4.806, p<.011) = Longer RT for high TA (Fig.1).

V. Discussion

- Attention is engaged in prosaccade condition, when the location of the target is activated.
- Participants with high anxiety-trait have greater inhibition deficit when processing human faces.
- Low SA and EA reportedly lead to worse performance in non social task, suggesting a possible modulation of performances by non social cues (to be investigated).
- Aims of the study
- Non clinical sample
- Further studies
- Steady-State Potentials to assess brain activity in anti-saccade task.
- More studies displaying neutral non social stimuli for a better understanding of categorization processes in non anxious people.

**References**