



Relationships among trait anxiety, anxiety sensitivity and anxiety symptoms in a community sample of children from 8 to 12.

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Theoretical Background

- High prevalence of anxiety in children and adolescents (Beesdo et al, 2009).
- Vulnerability to anxiety would involve high levels of anxiety sensitivity (AS) :
 - AS refers to the fear of behaviours and sensations associated with the experience of anxiety based on the belief that anxiety symptoms have harmful consequences (Cox et al, 1999 ; McNally, 2002);
 - Increased risk for panic disorder, social anxiety disorder, generalised anxiety disorder, PTSD, depression, health anxiety, chronic pain, and substance use disorder (Watts & Stewart, 2009).
- Aims of the study :
 - Examine the relations between AS, trait anxiety (TA), and six dimensions of anxiety (separation anxiety, social anxiety, generalised anxiety, panic symptoms, obsessive-compulsive symptoms and depressive symptoms) in children aged 8-12.
 - Examine whether these factors can be predictive of behavioural and emotional difficulties reported by their parents → **Questionnaire-based study and correlation/regression analyses.**

Methods

Participants : 100 children (44 ♀ ; M_{age} : 10.3y, SD : 1.5) recruited in collaborating primary schools.

- Measures :
- Children Anxiety Sensitivity Inventory - CASI (Silverman et al, 2010).
 - Spielberger Trait Anxiety Inventory for Children - STAI-C (Spielberger, 1973).
 - Revised Children's Anxiety and Depression Scale – RCADS (Chorpita et al, 2005).
 - Child Behaviour Checklist- CBCL (Achenbach, 1991).

Descriptive Statistics

	Mean	S.D.	Min.	Max
CASI	19.7	12.3	0	48
STAI-C	38.5	2.9	28	47
RCADS	33.5	23.8	2	108
CBCL				
- Internalizing	4.8	6.3	0	30
- Externalizing	5.9	8.9	0	43

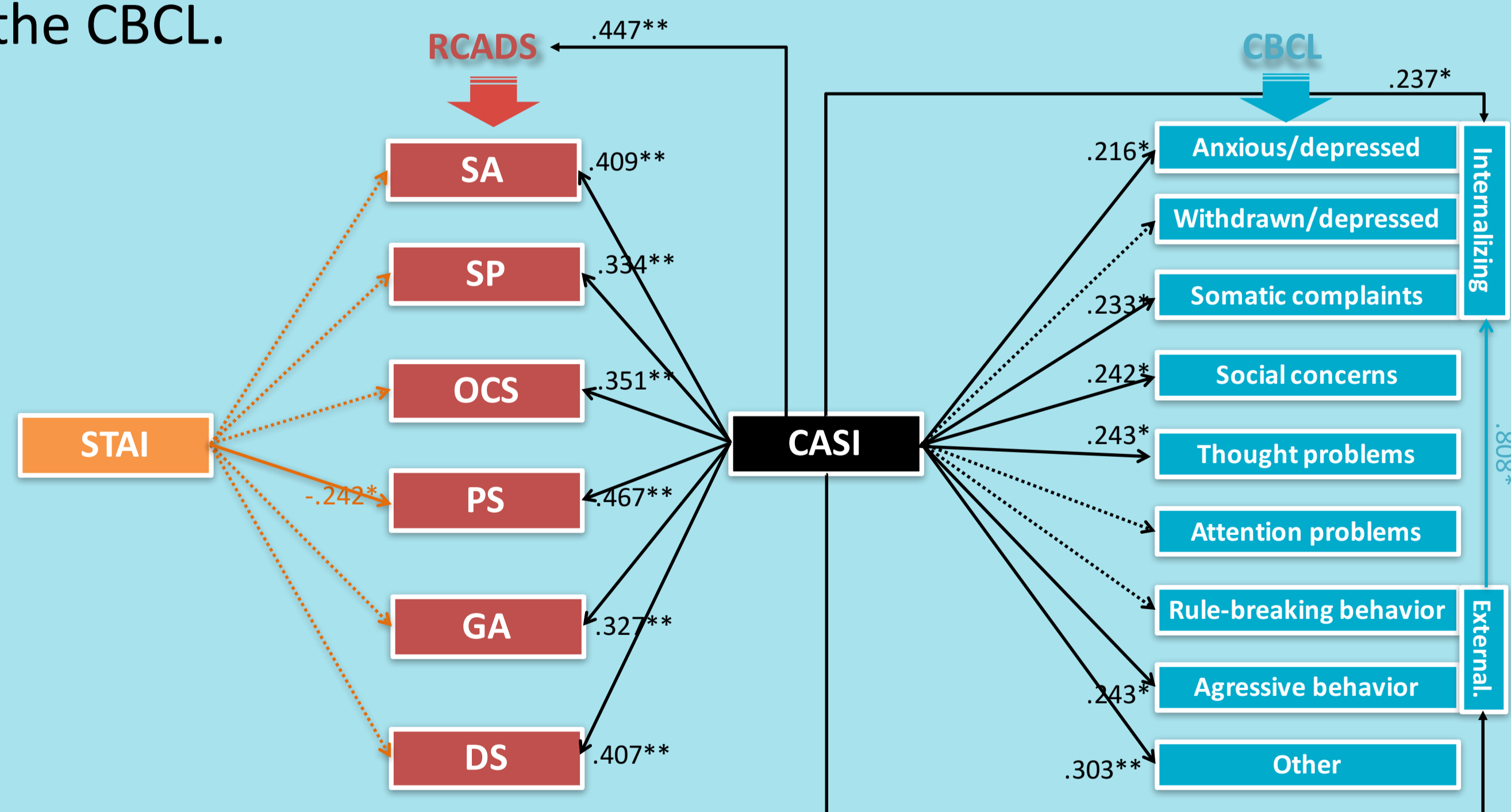
Analyses

Correlational analyses :

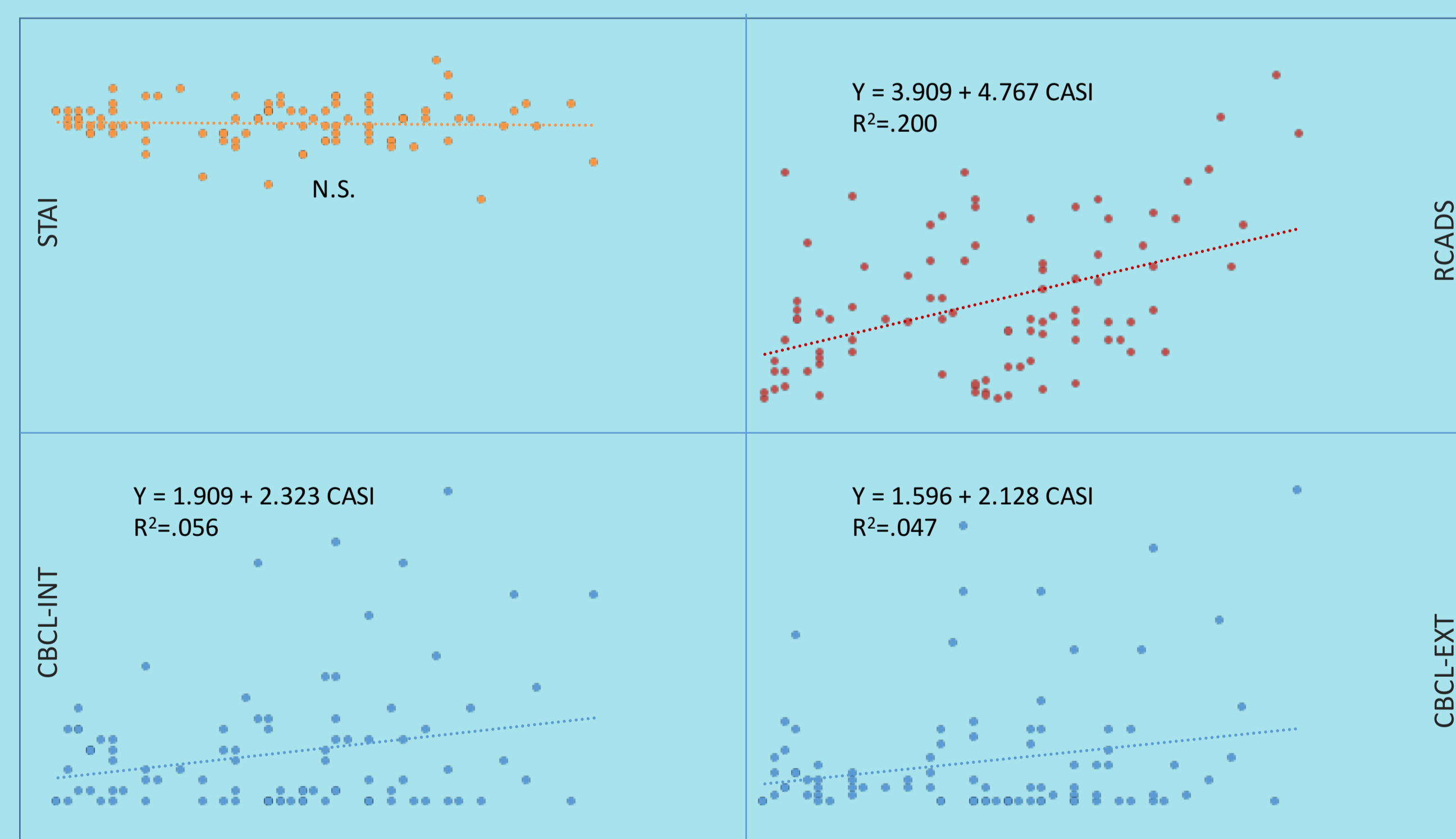
- The CASI score was correlated to the all subscales of the RCADS and to 6 dimensions of the CBCL.
- The STAI-C were not correlated to the CASI nor to the RCADS and the CBCL.

Linear regressions (backward elimination) evidenced one-variable model involving the CASI as better predictor of :

- RCADS global score : $F(1,91)=22.721, p >.001$.
- Internalizing problems at the CBCL : $F(1,91)=5.397, p=.022$.
- Externalizing problems at the CBCL : $F(1,91)=4.527, p=.036$.



Notes : SA : Separation Anxiety ; SP : Social Phobia ; OCS : Obsessive-Compulsive Symptoms ; PS : Panic Symptoms ; GA : Generalised Anxiety ; DS : Depressive Symptoms. * $p >.05$; ** $p >.01$.



Discussion :

Anxiety sensitivity may mediate the development of emotional distress in children prone to attend anxiety symptoms

- Children reporting high AS levels are more prone to experience panic symptoms but also separation anxiety, social anxiety, obsessive-compulsive symptoms and dysphoric feelings.
- High level of AS is predictive to internalizing but also externalizing difficulties reported by parents.

Perspectives : disentangling the role of Physical, Cognitive and Social Concerns dimensions of AS (Allan et al, 2015 ; Ghisi et al, 2016).

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