

The Importance of Measuring Social Anhedonia in Adolescence: A Case for the ACIPS-A [Letter]

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Dear editor

We read the paper, “Psychometric properties of the Chinese version of the Anhedonia Scale for adolescents and identification of the subpopulation with prominent anhedonia” by Ye et al,¹ which recently appeared in your journal. We concur that adolescents are not simply “little adults” and, therefore, warrant measures that are specifically valid for their needs. The ASA-C may be such a measure. However, while promoting one measure, we believe that other measures must be described appropriately. We appreciate this opportunity to address some misstatements in the paper.

The Chinese version of the Anhedonia Scale for Adolescents (ASA-C) is not the only available anhedonia scale for adolescent groups. The adolescent version of the Anticipatory and Consummatory Interpersonal Pleasure Scale (ACIPS-A²) has been available in English, Spanish, and Chinese since 2016. The adolescent version of the ACIPS specifically assesses social anhedonia. This is noteworthy, given that social anhedonia, characterized by a reduced experience of pleasure from social interactions and/or a reduced motivation or interest in pursuing interpersonal relationships, is a distinct subtype of anhedonia. Social anhedonia is a transdiagnostic symptom, and social anhedonia-associated psychopathology, such as depression, often develops during or shortly after adolescence. Moreover, social anhedonia is associated with heightened risk for the later development of schizophrenia-spectrum disorders.^{3,4}

The authors’ characterization of the adolescent version of the ACIPS (ACIPS-A) is not wholly accurate. The ACIPS-A was modified to be developmentally appropriate for adolescents in terms of response format and wording. By focusing on reward gained through social/interpersonal interactions, the ACIPS-A was designed as an indirect measure of social anhedonia. It is a well-validated measure with good psychometric properties (for example, the internal consistency, as measured by ordinal alpha = 0.95). To date, the ACIPS-A has been administered to several adolescent samples, including a validation sample in Spain,² singleton adolescents,⁵ and twin adolescents in the U.S.⁶ The ACIPS-A can capture the unique developmental and emotional characteristics of adolescents, as evidenced by its significant associations with the revised Early Adolescent Temperament Questionnaire (EATQ-R).⁶

Only 2 of the 14 items on the ASA seem relevant to social anhedonia; one item assesses detachment, and the other measures connectedness. It is advisable to use the ASA in combination with our ACIPS-A. As others have demonstrated,⁷ adolescence may be a period when social anhedonia is at its peak. The ACIPS-A, translated into Mandarin, is available upon request.

Acknowledgment

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Disclosure

Dr Diane C Gooding reports honoraria for work as Deputy Editor for Psychiatry Research from Elsevier. The authors report no other conflicts of interest in this communication.

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