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"Biopsychosocial Trajectories of Children with Dysregulated Fear"

Presentation Abstract

Social anxiety disorder (SAD), one of the most prevalent disorders in children and adolescents, is associated with significant impairment across familial, social, and academic domains. In addition, research is accumulating to suggest that SAD symptoms confer significant risk for other disorders across development (e.g., Generalized Anxiety Disorder, Depression). Fearful temperament is an early-emerging, biologically-based, individual difference that is associated with the development of SAD symptoms. Social anxiety symptoms are a common problem in middle childhood for fearful children, but it is unknown for whom and to what degree this impairs functioning. My program of research focuses on a specific refinement of fearful behavior—dysregulated fear—and incorporates biological, social, and environmental factors to elucidate the adaptive and maladaptive trajectories of SAD symptom development. This talk will focus on the translational implication of this work by providing evidence for which fearful children are at greatest risk, under which conditions, and initial findings of biological mechanisms and parenting processes that increase or attenuate risk for anxiety symptom development.