

# POSTER SESSION 02

Abstract No.: 0580

## Examination of the Cognitive Processes in Everyday Social Situations Based on Metacognitive Therapy

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### INTRODUCTION

Self-focused attention (SFA) from the observer perspective, that is, people with high social anxiety focus their attention on themselves through the eyes of others, is important in the cognitive-behavioral model of social anxiety disorder (SAD) (Clark & Wells, 1995). One of the effective treatments for SAD is Metacognitive Therapy (MCT; Wells, 2009). In MCT, the A-M-C model is used for case formulations: A denotes the activating event, which is specifically identified as an internal trigger, a thought, rather than a situation, M represents metacognitions and CAS which consists of excessive conceptual processing in the form of worry and rumination, and C refers to emotional and behavioral consequences (Wells, 2009). CAS includes self-focused attention, and MCT emphasizes modifying self-focused attention by monitoring external attention (Wells, 2007). However, it has not been investigated whether the cognitive processes of the AMC model are actually occurring in the daily life situations of socially anxious individuals. Therefore, the purpose of the present study is to examine the cognitive process in social situations of daily life based on MCT using the Ecological Momentary Assessment. In the present study, A was positioned as two perceptions of stimuli, gaze and evaluation, which had predicted self-focused attention in Nanamori et al. (2022), M as self-focused attention from the observer perspective, and C as anxiety. The hypothesis is that perception of evaluation would influence anxiety via gaze perception and self-focused attention.

### METHOD

The subjects were 22 students with high social anxiety (4 men and 18 women with mean age  $\pm$  SD of  $20.82 \pm 2.06$ ). Web questionnaires were sent to the participants three times a day for 10 days, asking about their perception of gaze and evaluation in a social situation within the past five hours, their self-focused attention from the observer perspective, and their anxiety level.

### RESULTS

Since the data had a hierarchy of levels 1 (repeated assessments) and 2 (individuals), multilevel structural equation modeling was conducted to examine the effects on anxiety via self-focused attention among the level 1 variables. The result showed that goodness of fit did not meet the criteria (CFI = .82, RMSEA = .168, SRMR = .103). However, the additional consideration of the path from the perception of evaluation to anxiety met the criteria for the acceptable fit (CFI = 0.968, RMSEA = .086, SRMR = .049).

### CONCLUSIONS

In the present study, the result indicates that in addition to the cognitive process that perceiving gaze in being evaluated situations leads to anxiety via self-focused attention, there is also a cognitive process in which the perception of being evaluated itself leads to anxiety in daily life. Since SAD displays a continuum between the clinical and non-clinical groups (Kollman et al., 2006), the result may apply to SAD patients. One of the MCT techniques effective for SAD is situational attentional refocusing (SAR), which aims to reduce self-attention by directing attention to moderate external stimuli (Wells, 2009). Patients with SAD have the characteristics of excessive perception of gaze from others (Schulze et al., 2013). The results of this study suggest that teaching patients to observe the gaze of others in the situation being evaluated in SAR to suppress excessive gaze perception may be effective in reducing self-focused attention. The result that the perception of evaluation directly affects anxiety may be related to the intensified concern for others' evaluation, which is one of the maintaining factors of social anxiety (Clark & Wells, 1995). Improvement of SAD requires not only a reduction of self-focused attention but also interventions to reduce fear of evaluation.

# Examination of the cognitive processes in everyday social situations based on metacognitive therapy

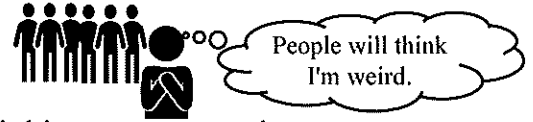
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## INTRODUCTION

One of the maintenance factors of **Social Anxiety Disorder (SAD)**:

### Self-focused attention (SFA)

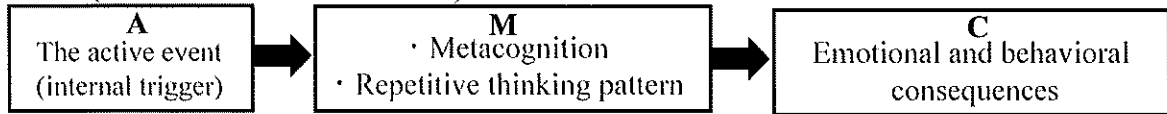
• **SFA from the observer perspective**, that is, people with social anxiety view themselves through the eyes of others, is important (Clark & Wells, 1995).



### Metacognitive Therapy (MCT):

MCT focuses on modifying metacognitive beliefs and repetitive thinking patterns such as worry, rumination, and attention fixation (Wells, 2009).

### The AMC model (used for case formulation)



However...

It has yet to be investigated whether the cognitive processes of the AMC model do indeed occur in the daily life situations of socially anxious individuals.

**Purpose** To examine the cognitive process in social situations of daily life based on MCT.

## METHOD

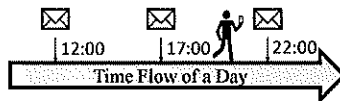
**Subject** : 22 university students with high social anxiety (male:4, female:18, the average of age: 20.82 ± 2.06)

**[Items of EMA]**

The study used **Ecological Momentary Assessment (EMA)**

→ A method of recording subjects' experiences in real life in real time. (Shiffman, Stone, & Hufford, 2008)

- Participants respond about social situations they have experienced in the past 5 hours.
- Participants will be emailed with a URL attached 3 times a day for 10 days.

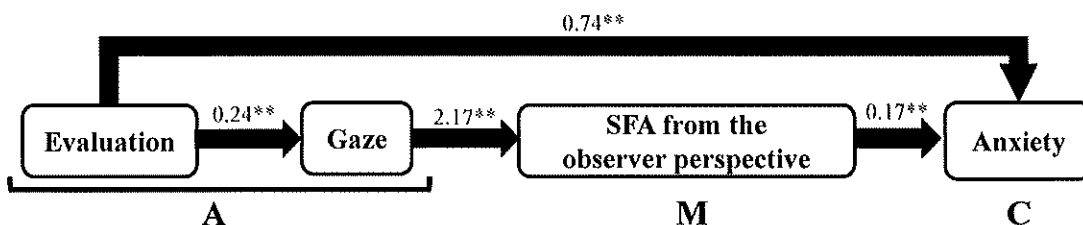


Ethical approval: This study was approved by the Ethics Review Committee on Research with Human Subjects of Waseda University.

Items	Questions
Social situation	Participants reflect on events within the past five hours and select from nine social situations they have experienced.
Gaze and evaluation in the social situation (A)	Measuring the presence of gaze and evaluation in the social situation.
SFA from the observer perspective (M)	Measuring the degree of SFA from the observer perspective.
Anxiety (C)	Measuring anxiety about social situations experienced.

## RESULT

**Multilevel structural equation modeling** ( $^*p < .05$ ,  $^{**}p < .01$ ,  $N = 316$ )



CFI = 0.968  
 RMSEA = .086  
 SRMR = .049

## DISCUSSION

Two cognitive processes:

1. The perceiving gaze in situations of being evaluated leads to anxiety via SFA.

2. The perception of being evaluated also leads to anxiety in daily life.

Patients with SAD have the characteristics of an **excessive perception of the gaze** of others (Schulze et al., 2013)

The result may be related to an intensified **fear of others' evaluation**, which is a maintenance factor of social anxiety (Clark & Wells, 1995)

1. Teaching patients to observe the gaze of others in the situation being evaluated and to suppress excessive gaze perception may be effective in reducing SFA.

2. Improving social anxiety requires not only a reduction of SFA but also interventions to reduce the fear of evaluation.

I have no financial relationships to disclose.

## 発表概要報告書

【目的】観察者視点からの自己注目（O視点の自己注目）とは、他者の目を通して自分に注目することであり、社交不安症（SAD）の維持要因とされている（Clark & Wells, 1995）。SADに対する効果的な治療法として、メタ認知療法（MCT; Wells, 2009）が挙げられる。MCTではケースフォーミュレーションにAMCモデルが使用され、Aは内的活性化、Mは心配や反芻から構成される認知的注意症候群（CAS）とメタ認知、Cは感情・行動的結果をそれぞれ指している（Wells, 2009）。CASにはO視点の自己注目が含まれ、MCTは外的注意のモニタリングによってO視点の自己注目を修正することに重点を置く（Wells, 2007）。しかし、日常生活下におけるAMCモデルの認知プロセスについては検討されていない。そこで、本研究は生態学的瞬間評価法を用いて日常生活下の社交場面における認知プロセスをMCTの観点から検討することを目的とする。本研究では、七森他（2022）の研究でO視点の自己注目を予測した視線と評価の2つの刺激知覚をA、O視点の自己注目をM、不安をCと位置づけた。評価の知覚が視線知覚とO視点の自己注目を介して不安に影響を与えることを仮説とした。

【方法】参加者は社交不安傾向が高い学生22名（男性4名、女性18名、平均年齢 $20.82 \pm 2.06$ ）であった。参加者は過去5時間以内の社会場面における視線と評価の知覚、O視点の自己注目、不安について、1日3回Webアンケートに回答した。調査期間は10日間であった。

【結果】マルチレベル共分散構造分析の結果、適合度は良い基準を満たさなかったが（CFI = .82, RMSEA = .168, SRMR = .103）、評価の知覚から不安へのパスを追加したところ、許容できる適合度の基準を満たした（CFI = 0.968, RMSEA = 0.086, SRMR = 0.049）。

【考察】本研究では評価される状況下での視線知覚がO視点の自己注目を介して不安につながる認知プロセスに加え、評価されることの知覚が不安につながるという認知プロセスが存在することが示された。MCTの技法の一つである状況再注意法（SAR）は、注意を外部刺激に向けることで自己注目を低減することを目的とする（Wells, 2009）。SAD患者は視線知覚の過剰性を特徴とすることから（Schulze et al., 2013）、SARにおいて他者の視線を観察し、過剰な視線知覚を抑制するよう教示することが、O視点の自己注目の軽減につながる可能性が考えられる。評価の知覚が不安に直接影響するという結果は、SADの維持要因である他者評価懸念の強さと関連する可能性がある（Clark & Wells, 1995）。SADの改善には、O視点の自己注目の軽減だけでなく、評価への恐怖を軽減することも必要であることが示唆された。

（日本語 1200 字以内）

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