

## POTENTIAL TREATMENTS IN TREATING SOCIAL ANXIETY DISORDER

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### Abstract

The purposed of this research is to determine the potential treatments in treating Social Anxiety Disorder (SAD). This paper proposes a framework to identify four main aspects concerning about the potential treatments in treating Social Anxiety Disorder (SAD). As a result, the study reveals that the potential treatment for SAD consists of Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT), social skills training, medications and Complementary and Alternative Therapies. This paper also shows the table analysis of review and the figure proposed research framework.

**Keywords:** treatments, Social Anxiety Disorder, Cognitive Behavioral Therapy, social skills, therapies.

### 1. Introduction

American Psychiatric Association (2013) stated that Social Anxiety Disorder (SAD) is characterized by a constant fear of social situations with an exposure to unfamiliar faces. Individuals with this disorder usually report pronounced fear of negative judgement by others, including fear of embarrassment with anxiety in a broad range of situations (Iverach et al., 2017). Failure to realize and delays to seek treatment about SAD will lead to poor mental health literacy. It will give a negative outcome upon treatment completion. Awareness of Social Anxiety Disorder (SAD) is important as a source of distress and individuals that aware about this disorder should seeking treatment for their mental health concerns. Recognizing distress as anxiety related, could help people to be treated more efficiently, reducing costs and improve their quality of life. (Paulus, Wadsworth & Hayes-Skelton, 2015).

The aim of this study is to study the potential treatments in treating Social Anxiety Disorder (SAD). In order to achieve this objective, this research proposed a framework to identify four main alternatives of the potential treatment in treating social anxiety. The remainder of this paper is organized as follows. Section 2 is literature review. Proposed framework is in Section 3. Final section contains some concluding remarks.

### 2. Literature Review

This research is to determine the potential treatments in treating Social Anxiety Disorder (SAD). For the potential treatments in treating this anxiety, this study focus on four main aspects; Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT), social skills training, medications and Complementary and Alternative Therapies.

### *2.1 Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT)*

Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT) can be defined as type of talking therapy that involves examining the ways how people think and feel about themselves and others in critical situations. This treatment involves helping people with anxiety to build up positive habits of thinking and responding to critical situations. The study shown the treatment effectiveness indicated that patients appeared to achieve an advantage from this treatment (Spain et al., 2017). According to Iverach et al. (2017), the study explained that people who stutter were encouraged to use this treatment to manage anxiety in social and speaking situations. It had a potential to control the expectation of negative thinking and the tendency to engage in self-focus. Previous study shown that it had proven effective both in individually-administered and group-administered format (Tulbure et al., 2015). Meanwhile, Leichsenring et al. (2013) stated that CBT and psychodynamic therapy were both effective as a treatment in treating social anxiety disorder; however, there were significant differences in favour of CBT. As was previously stated above, CBT were effective for social anxiety as it focusing on building skill, self- focus and cognitive restructuring (Epkins & Seegan, 2014).

### *2.2 Social Skill Trainings (SST)*

Lack in social skills has been assumed as one of the dominant aspects of social anxiety disorder. Previous study shown that the applicability of Social Skill Training(SST) in clinical context was confirmed as one of the best treatments of choice for patients with primary or secondary diagnosis of generalized SAD (Angélico, Crippa & Loureiro, 2013). According to Pabian & Vandebosch (2016), the study that has been made indicates the further development of these skills will be a good strategy to improve defensibility and to lessen bullying among adolescent. It also stated that teachers and parents should be more aware of the significance in providing social skills training for adolescent to reduce their anxiety and enhance the relationships with friends. However, Beidel et al. (2014) mentioned that consistent with the treatment of Social Skills Training alone is not efficacious for SAD. On the contrary, another study stated that it teaches pro-social behaviours to the patients that lacking in socialize. Results of the current analysis suggest Social Skills Training (SST) to be an important part of treatment success for SAD (Beidel et al., 2014). Therefore, SST should be one of the great starts in treating social anxiety as it would help to encourage people with disorder to be more comfortable in society and conquering their fear.

### *2.3 Medications*

Medications was measured as useful when used additionally to therapy and self-help techniques that recognized the origin factor of social anxiety disorder. Butterfield et al. (2017) clarified that standard treatments usually been used for depression and anxieties were pharmacological treatments, cognitive behavioral therapies, complementary and alternative therapies. However, there are a range of psychological and pharmacological treatments for SAD. Evidence of the study indicates that Cognitive Behavioral Therapy was equally effective or more superior to the typical psychiatric treatment that related with medication (Tulbure et al., 2015). In previous

study, Mavranezouli et al. (2015) also acknowledged that individually that used psychological therapies were demonstrated to be more effective than drugs. People who improved in anxiety usually need to follow pharmacological treatments that were expected to acquire another 26 weeks of maintenance treatment with the same drugs. In a short term recovery, medication can be used as one of the main treatments as medication intervention considered overall more cost-effective than psychological interventions (Mavranezouli et al., 2015).

#### *2.4 Complementary and Alternative Therapies*

Mindfulness meditation, yoga, relaxation techniques and some exercise can be considered as complementary and alternative therapies to help reduce social anxiety after conventional treatment. According to Kumar et al. (2017), mindfulness has been defined as focusing one's awareness on the present situation in a non-judgemental way. The improvement in psychological treatment model using mindfulness –based stress reduction (MBSR) and mindfulness-based cognitive therapy (MBCT) were introduced to help people with this disorder. In other words, people with low self-esteem can learn to control negative thoughts and feelings during social occasions by practicing mindfulness. In another study, Zeidan et al. (2013) stated that long-term training in mindfulness meditation manage to improve cognitive processes. The study had shown that individual that chose this treatment will acknowledge the benefits of mindfulness meditation after a brief training by clinicians and be able to decide whether to continue the practice or not. Aside mindfulness, clinicians can suggest patients to engage in yoga as it also played important part in mental health care.

According to previous study, autonomic nervous system will have a positive impact after practicing yoga thus help to reduce the anxiety symptoms, heart rate and blood pressure of people with anxiety (Butterfield et al., 2017). In addition, the use of relaxation techniques and focusing on the task also encourage coping abilities of people with anxiety (Angélico, Crippa & Loureiro, 2013). In contrast of mindfulness and yoga, exercise also part of complementary and alternative therapies for social anxiety. Technology improvement today had created Virtual Reality (VR) exercise interventions with the aims of promoting mental health that may enhance the mental health benefits of exercise. According to study by Zeng et al. (2018), VR exercise had a potential to be therapy in the treatment of anxiety. Basic exercise equipment like bikes and treadmills innovated in VR capabilities with great sensors that sync with a computer and console will allowed the user to engage in physical application. However, the study results about effectiveness of VR exercise on anxiety only focused on small group yet it shown the improvements in mental health.

Table 1: Analysis of Review

Authors	Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT)	Social Skill Training (SST)	Medication	Complementary & Alternative Therapies
Spain et al. (2017)	✓			
Iverach et al. (2017)	✓			
Kumar et al. (2017)				✓
Ranta , Laakkonen & Niemi (2016)	✓			
Butterfield et al. (2017)			✓	✓
Angélico, Crippa & Loureiro (2013)	✓	✓		✓
Ringle et al. (2015)	✓			
Zeidan et al. (2013)				✓
Tulbure et al. (2015)	✓		✓	
Leichsenring et al. (2013)	✓			
Leichsenring et al. (2013)	✓			
Mavranezouli et al. (2015)			✓	
Pabian & Vandebosch (2016)		✓		
Epkins & Seegan, (2014)	✓			
Zeng et al. (2018)				✓
Beidel et al. (2014)		✓		

### 3. Proposed Framework

Figure 1 show that proposed framework to guide this research concern potential treatment in treating Social Anxiety Disorder (SAD) which is Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT), social skills training, medications and Complementary and Alternative Therapies. In this study, we identified those four different independence variables. Independence variables define based on previous discussion in Section 2.1 Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT), Section 2.2 Social Skill Trainings, Section 2.3 Medication and also Section 2.4 Complementary and Alternative Therapies. These independence variables are essential due to the potential treatment in treating Social Anxiety Disorder (SAD).

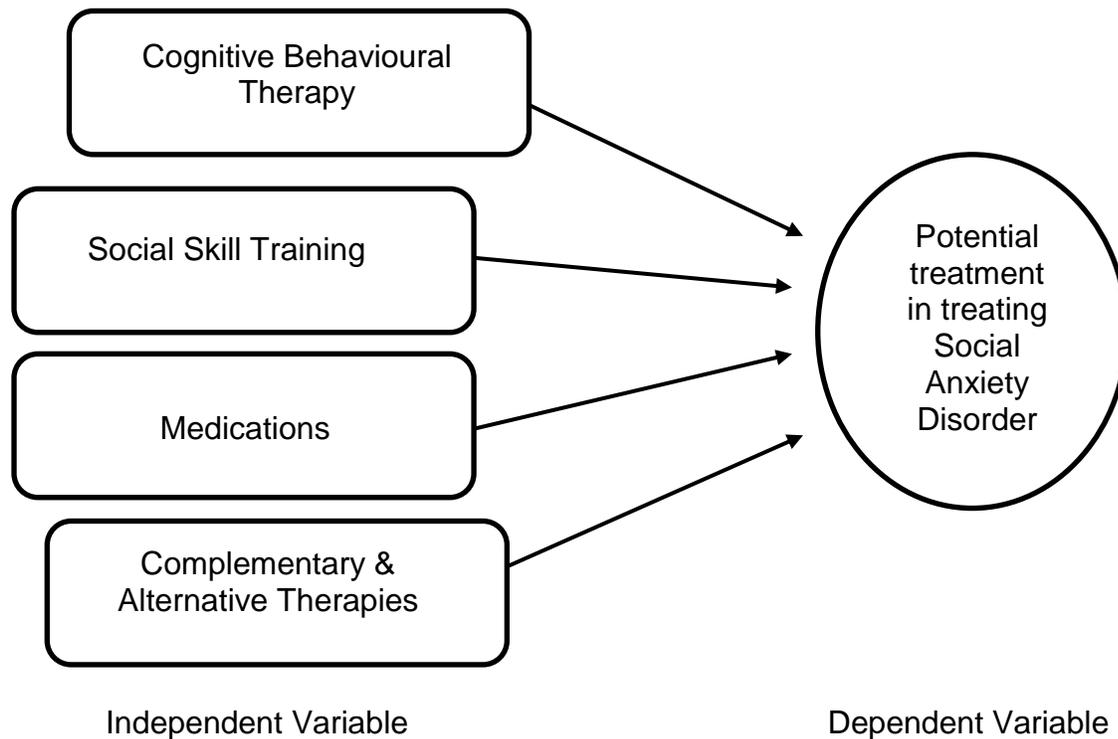


Figure 1: Proposed research framework

#### 4. Conclusions

For a conclusion, social anxiety disorder is quite common concern that can be treated with treatments like psychotherapy, social skill training, medications and self-help techniques. Consequently, treatment mostly depends on how much social anxiety disorder impact on the individual life. People may react differently to the type of social anxiety treatment. Some people may give a positive feedback to treatment without need further treatment, while others may need to continue with the treatment and deal with the treatment throughout their lives. Nevertheless, individual should acknowledge first the symptom and gain courage to seeking out help from a psychologist.

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