Anxiety and stress coping mechanism. The mediating role of emotional intelligence

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Introduction
Anxiety is conceptualized as a multidimensional construct of personality that involves perceptual, cognitive, behavioral and affective factors (Görgen, Hiller, Witthöft, 2014). Research has proved that there are two forms of anxiety: trait and state. The first one refers to a constant and more permanent personality feature, while state anxiety refers to a temporary and transitional state (Spielberger and Vagg, 1995). With regard to the Emotional Intelligence (EI), it is also understood as two different constructs: trait and capacity (skills) (Petrides, 2011). The present study is focused on the coping approach as a problem solving mechanism (Carlo et al., 2012). This coping mechanism has proved to be productive in the solution to the problem generated by the stress (Hooberman et al., 2010) versus the coping avoidance mechanism based on emotion (Roberts et al., 2012).

Objectives
The aim of this poster is to analyze the relationships between anxiety, emotional intelligence and coping mechanism when facing stressful situations and to prove the mediating role of emotional intelligence between anxiety and coping mechanism.

Method
Participants
This study comprised 434 Nursing Degree students from Valencia (Spain), 256 students at private universities (59%) and 78 students at public universities. The population is aged between 18 to 50 years (M=21; SD=320) (Chart 1). 76% women and 24% men of them are single, 23.3% with partner, 3.7% married and 1.3% divorced (Chart 3). Socioeconomic status level (): 25% high status, 16.6% middle-high socioeconomic status, 36.2% middle socioeconomic status, and 22.2% middle-low status.

Procedure/Method
A cross-sectional study, based on self reports, and completed by the students themselves has been used. The evaluation was voluntary and anonymous, and respected the ethical principles for medical research involving human subjects.

Tools/Instruments
- State-Trait Anxiety (STAI E-R) (Spanish adaptation of Spielberger, Gorsuch, & Lushene, 1982). It uses 40 items to assess how one feels about stress at a particular moment (20 items for state anxiety) and how he/she generally feels (20 items for trait anxiety).
- Emotional Intelligence, Trait Emotional Intelligence Questionnaire (TEIQue-SF) (Cooper & Petrides, 2010), a Spanish adaptation of the instrument that measures the trait emotional intelligence (trait EI) as well as the dimensions labeled well-being, self-control, and sociability.
- Coping Responses Inventory- Adult Form (CRI-A) (Moos, 1993), a Spanish adaptation of a multidimensional approach of coping that assesses the way in which people face with stressful situations by coping approach or by avoiding the problem (avoidance coping).

Results
State anxiety is negatively correlated to the five dimensions of intelligence (well-being, self-control, emotionality, sociability and Global Trait), as well as to stress-coping strategies. However, there is a positive relationship between state anxiety and avoidance strategies.

Trait anxiety is negatively related to emotional intelligence in its five dimensions (well-being, self-control, emotionality, sociability and Global Trait). It is negatively related to the stress-coping strategies too. By contrast, trait anxiety is positively related to avoidance coping strategies.

Structural model for state and trait anxiety intelligence and approach and avoidance coping.

The hypothesized structural model shows the mediating role of emotional intelligence on state-trait anxiety and coping approach, whilst negatively impacts on avoidance coping strategies (that are dysfunctional ones as do not facilitate the strategies to lead to an effective problem solving (2000).

Conclusions
We found a negative relationship between both state and trait anxiety and the five main components of emotional intelligence (well-being, self-control, emotionality, sociability and Global Trait), as well as to stress-coping strategies. However, there is a positive relationship between state anxiety and avoidance strategies.

Limitations
A limitation of the current study is the transversal research design. Regarding emotional intelligence, there is a negative relationship between the five main components of emotional intelligence and coping avoidance, but a positive relationship between intelligence and coping approach. Emotional intelligence is involved in the proper management of emotions and is a determining factor for healthcare, being a good predictor for mental and also encourages personal strengthening process making coping with stress easier (Martins, Ramalho and Morin, 2010). Therefore, the mediating role of emotional intelligence in the relationship state and trait anxiety, and approach and avoidance coping is confirmed. These results have important implications for intervention to promote personal strengthening mechanisms.

References
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