

## **Abstract**

The present study examined the construct of behavioral inhibition and its utility in predicting anxiety symptoms among Chinese adolescents in Hong Kong. The moderating effect of parental over-protection and the mediating effect of sense of control were also examined. A total of 2324 participants of age 11 to 18 were recruited to complete a self-report battery consisting of the revised Retrospective Self-Report of Inhibition Scale, Behavioral Inhibition Scale, Parental Over-protection Scale, Sense of Control Scale, Spence Children's Anxiety Scale, and Center for Epidemiological Studies Depression Scale. Results support the factorial and construct validity of the RSRI. Both the retrospective and the current measures of behavioral inhibition significantly predicted anxiety and depressive symptoms. Results from structural equation modeling indicated that behavioral inhibition had both direct and indirect effects, mediated by sense of control, on anxiety and depressive symptoms. Over-protection produced indirect effect. However, no evidence was found for its moderating effect. These findings suggest that behavioral inhibition is a useful construct in predicting anxiety symptoms among Chinese adolescents. Results of this study also suggest that enhancement of a sense of control may be a useful preventive measure for adolescents who are biologically vulnerable to the future development of anxiety symptoms.