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## Correlational Analysis Between Self-Esteem and Selective Mutism

Janelle Ferraris

*University of Nevada, Las Vegas, ferraj3@unlv.nevada.edu*

Karina Carrillo-Juarez

*University of Nevada, Las Vegas, carrik7@unlv.nevada.edu*

Alexandra Caballero

*University of Nevada, Las Vegas, cabala6@unlv.nevada.edu*

Melanie Rede

*University of Nevada, Las Vegas*

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# Correlational Analysis Between Self-Esteem and Selective Mutism

Janelle Ferraris, Karina Carrillo-Juarez, Alexandra Caballero, Melanie Rede, BS,  
 Christopher A. Kearney, Ph. D.  
 University of Nevada, Las Vegas - Department of Psychology

## INTRODUCTION

### Key Terms

- **Selective Mutism:** Failing to speak in certain circumstances, but speaking in other environments (APA, 2022).
- **Self-Esteem:** A person's self-concept on the basis of their own worthiness and capabilities (APA, 2022).

### Background

Research suggests that some children believe there would be **negative consequences**, such as being **mocked** at or **disapproved** of by others, if they do not say the right words. Due to this, they may engage in **selective mutism** behaviors (Kearney, 2010).

## RESEARCH QUESTION & HYPOTHESIS

### Research Question

- Do low levels of self-esteem correlate with symptom severity of selective mutism?

### Hypothesis

- Low levels self-esteem correlate with high severity of selective mutism

## METHODS

### Participants

- **Sample 1:**  
 Data was surveyed in 3 different categories || N = 142
  - Child's Gender: 42 boys and 102 girls.
  - Child's Age in Years: 6-15 years old.
  - Child's Ethnic Group or Race - Selected Choice: Asian, African-American, European-American, Hispanic, Native American, Biracial/Multiracial, and Other.

### Measures

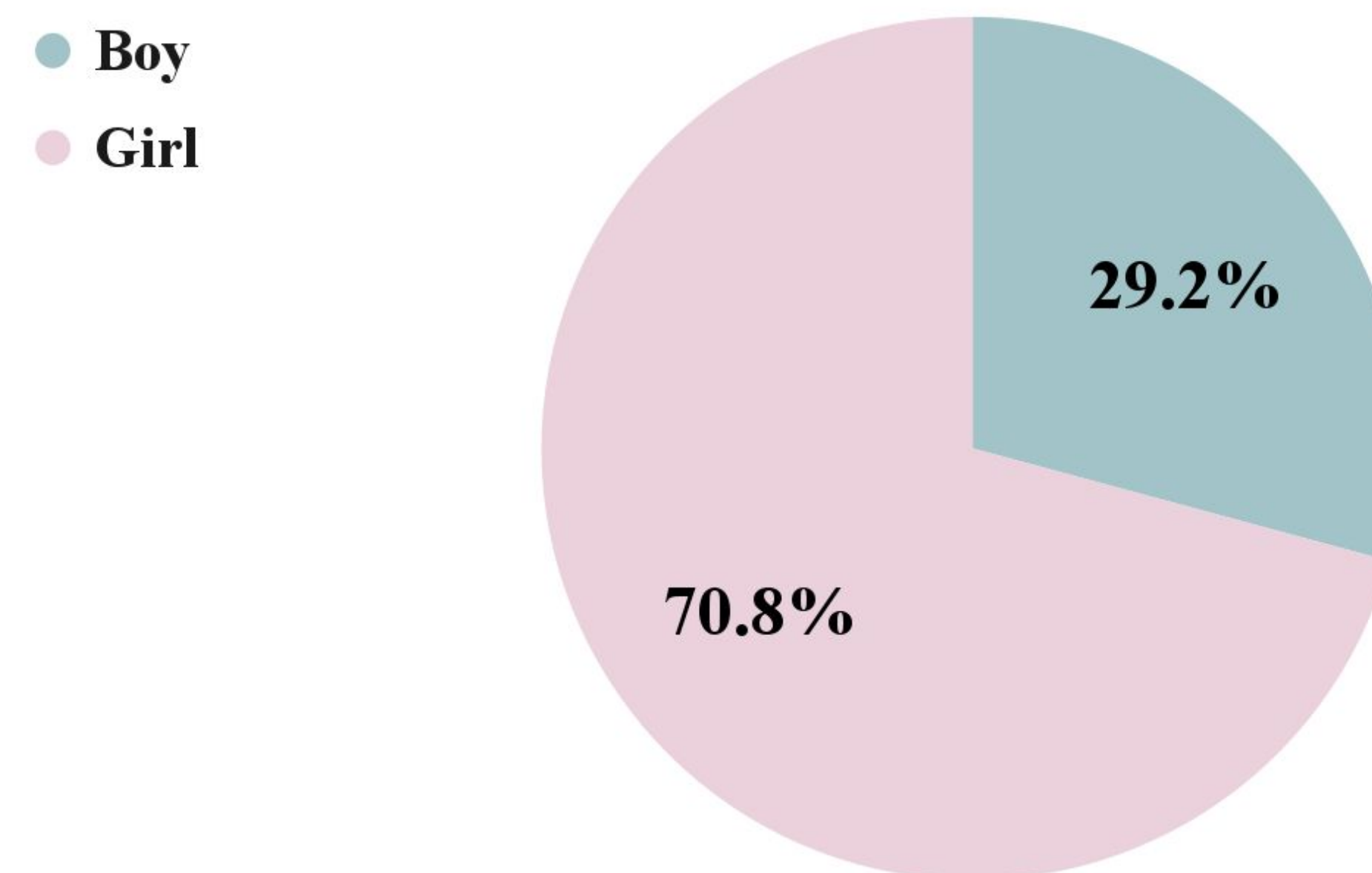
- **Child Behavior Checklist (Achenbach, 2001: CBCL)**  
 The study used questions 32, 33, 35, and 71 from the CBCL to measure self-esteem.
- **The Selective Mutism Questionnaire (Bergman et. al. 2008: SMQ)**  
 The SMQ was used to measure selective mutism severity.

### Procedure

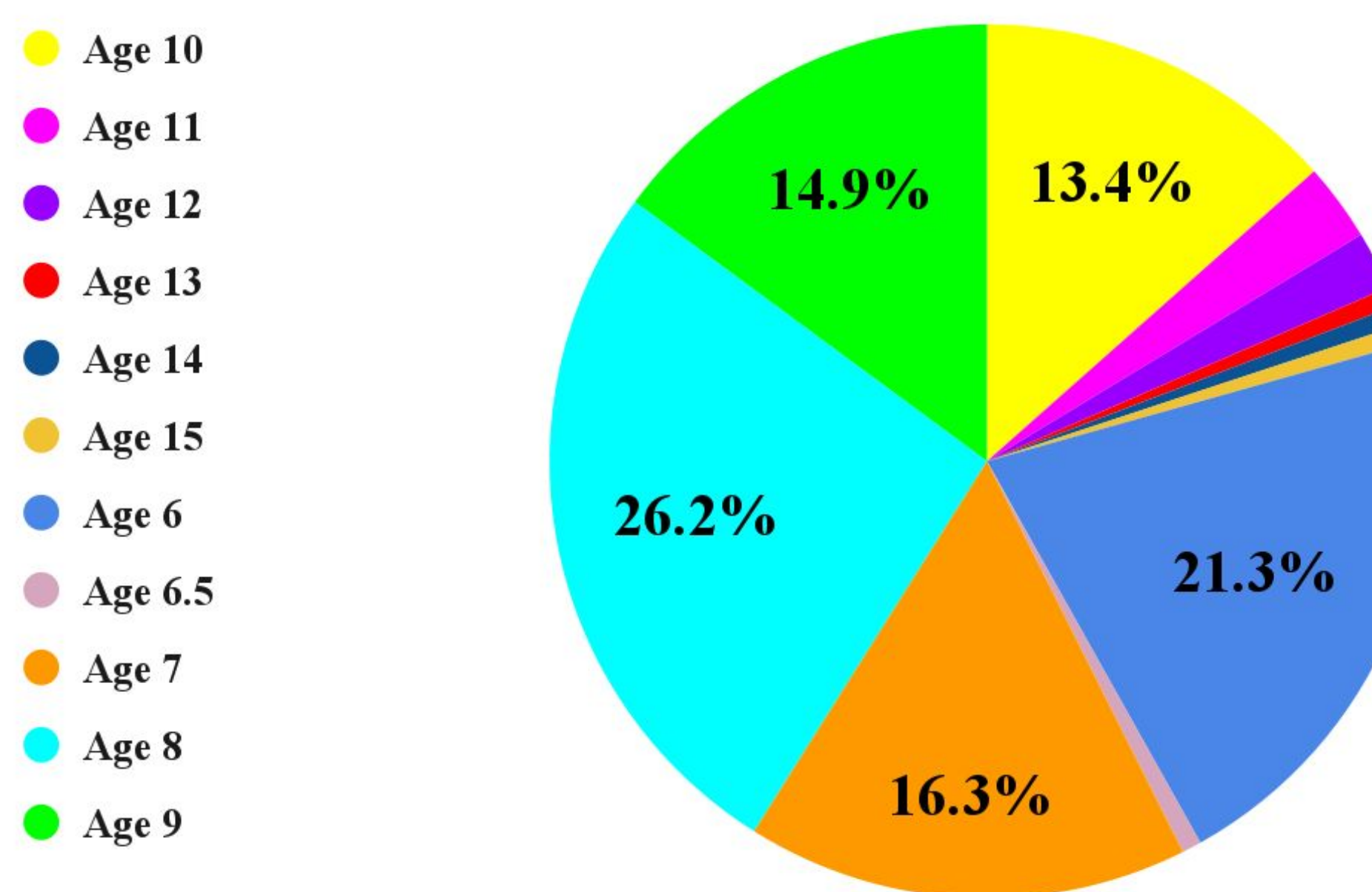
Data was collected from via online Qualtrics survey. We decided to use questions 32 (feels he/she has to be perfect), 33 (feels or complains that no one loves him/her), 35 (feels worthless or inferior), and 71 (self conscious or easily embarrassed) because they all relate to low levels of self-esteem.

## DEMOGRAPHICS

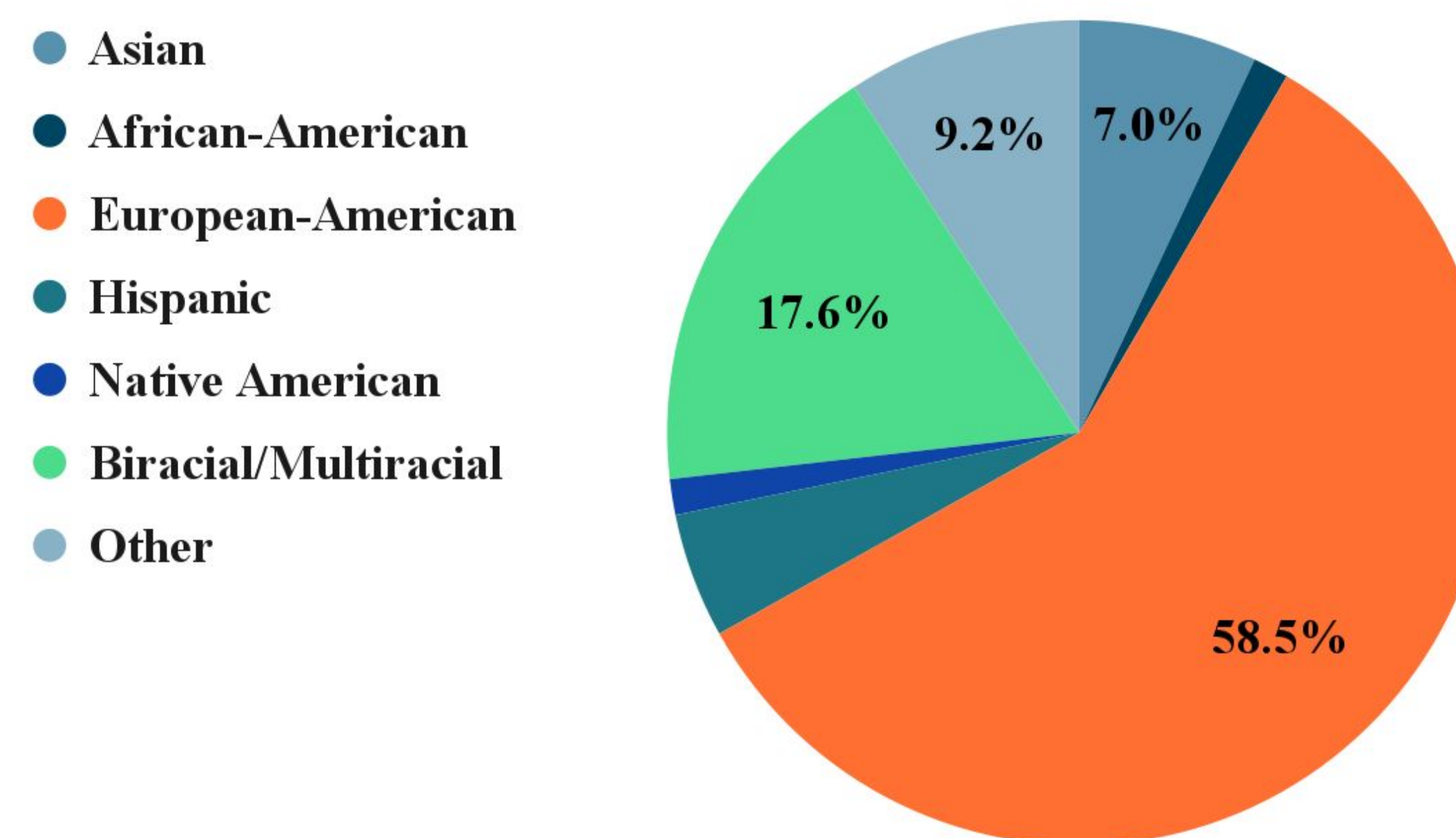
### Child's Gender



### Child's Age in Years



### Child's Ethnic Group or Race - Selected Choice



## RESULTS

### CBCL Questions Relating to Self-Esteem and SMQ Total Score

	SMQ Total Score: Pearson Correlation	SMQ Total Score: Sig. (2-Tailed)
Q32: Feels he/she has to be perfect	r = -.126	p = .163
Q33: Feels or complains that no one loves him/her	r = .026	p = .778
Q35: Feels worthless or inferior	r = -.125	p = .167
Q71: Self conscious or easily embarrassed	r = -.247*	p = .006*

### Results:

- The hypothesis was **partially** supported. Question 71 displayed significance and negative correlation: children with **higher** reported levels of **self-consciousness or easy embarrassment** (CBCL Q71) demonstrated **more severe symptoms** of **selective mutism** [r = -.247, p = .006].
- There were **no significant results** across the other items of negative self-esteem.

## DISCUSSION

These results demonstrate that children who **score higher** in being **self-conscious or easily embarrassed** are **may be more likely** to present **more severe symptoms of selective mutism**. These results also suggest that, in treating or identifying children with selective mutism, it is **beneficial to understand** the **severity** to which these children feel self-conscious or embarrassed.

Limitations include a **disproportionate** amount of girls (N = 102) to boys (N = 42). Future studies may benefit from studying **child self-reports of negative self-esteem**. Additionally, future research could gather specific information pertaining to which **environments** children are more likely to feel **self-conscious or embarrassed** in.

## REFERENCES

