



# Repetitive Negative Thought, Subjective Stress, and Symptoms of Depression and Anxiety

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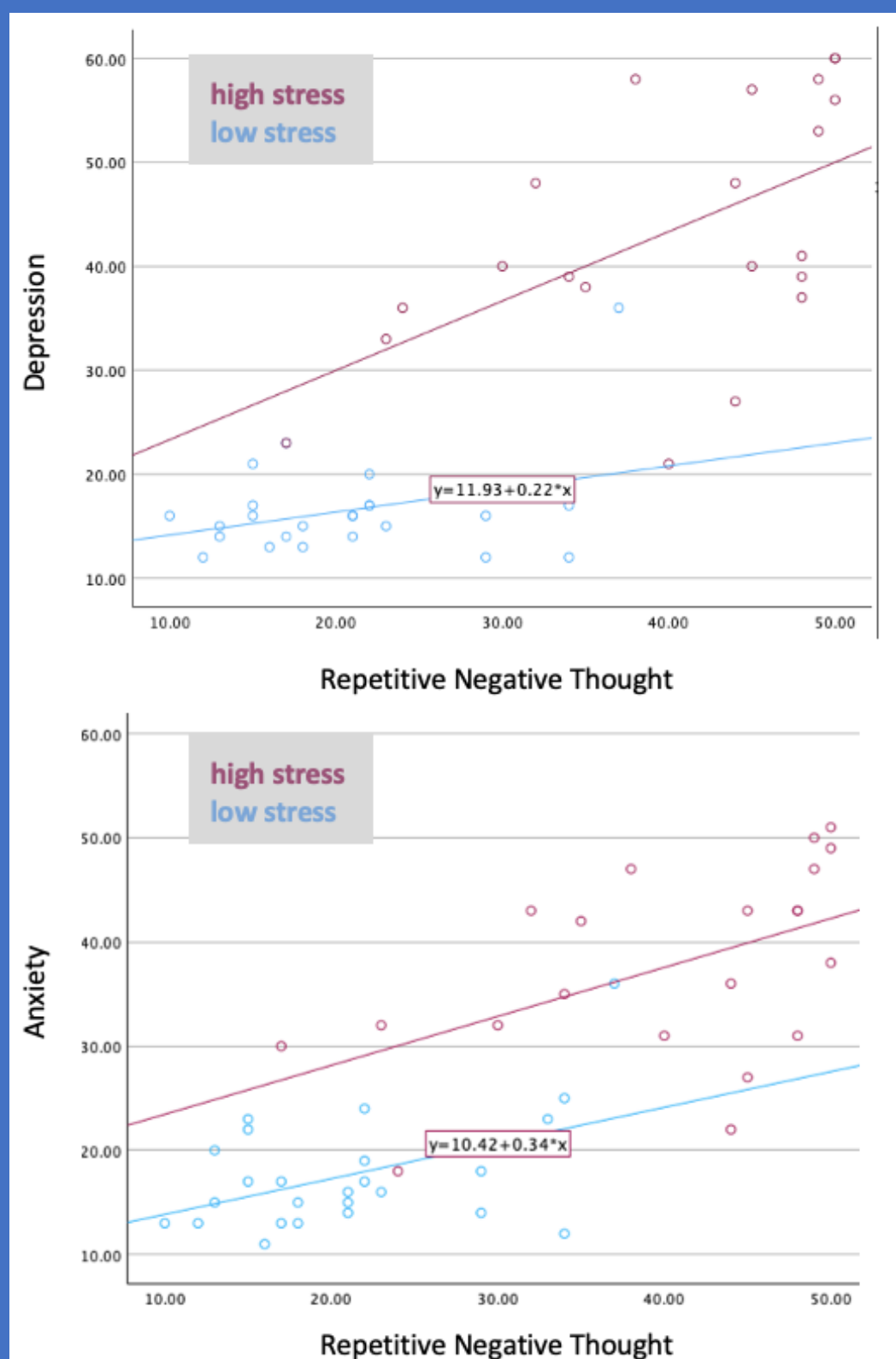
## Background

- Engagement in repetitive negative thought (RNT) in response to stress may be associated with risk for anxiety and depression symptoms (Roussis & Wells, 2008; Ruscio et al., 2011).
- We tested if subjective stress interacts with transdiagnostic trait RNT (the tendency to engage in RNT in response to distressing situations) to predict depression and anxiety symptoms over and above trait negative affect, which is expected to account for a significant amount of the variance in depression and anxiety.

## Methods

- 171 college students completed:
- Personality Inventory for DSM-5
- Repetitive Thinking Questionnaire
- Perceived Stress Scale
- Mood and Anxiety Symptom Questionnaire (MASQ)

Trait repetitive negative thought is more strongly associated with depression and anxiety symptoms at higher levels of subjective stress



## Results

- We conducted separate hierarchical multiple regression models predicting the general distress depression and anxiety subscales of the MASQ, with each predictor entered on its own step.
- As expected, when trait negative affect was entered on the first step, it accounted for a significant percentage of variance in both depression and anxiety (both  $R^2 = .35$ ).
- However, trait RNT (both  $R^2 > .13$ ), subjective stress (both  $R^2 > .05$ ), and the interaction between stress and trait RNT (both  $R^2 > .05$ ) were each associated with depression and anxiety symptoms above and beyond trait negative affect (all  $\beta > .56$ , all  $p < .05$ ).

## Discussion

The present data are limited by cross-sectional design, which does not allow conclusions about temporal relationships between variables and raises the risk that participants' current mood impacted reporting of all variables. Longitudinal data collection is ongoing to test if RNT and stress interact to predict later symptoms.