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# Frequency and comorbidity of social phobia and social fears in adolescents <sup>1</sup>

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## Abstract

This report presents findings on the frequency, comorbidity and psychosocial impairment of social phobia and social fears among 1035 adolescents, aged 12–17 years. The adolescents were randomly selected from 36 schools in the province of Bremen, Germany. Social phobia and other psychiatric disorders were coded based on DSM-IV criteria using the computerized Munich version of the Composite International Diagnostic Interview. Seventeen (1.6%) of the adolescents met the DSM-IV criteria for social phobia sometimes in their life. More girls than boys received the diagnosis of social phobia and the frequency of the disorder increased with age. The lifetime frequency of social fears were much higher than that of social phobia. The most common types of feared social situations were fear of doing something in front of other people, followed by public speaking. Social phobia comorbid highly with depressive disorders, somatoform disorders and substance use disorders. Despite the high level of

psychosocial impairment experienced by cases with social phobia and those with any social fears, only a small portion of them did receive professional help.



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## Keywords

Social phobia; Social fear; Comorbidity; Adolescents; Impairment

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