

PERCEPTIONS OF THERAPEUTIC STRATEGIES FOR ANXIETY DISORDERS: An Exploratory Comparison Between Portugal and France



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Abstract

Anxiety disorders (AD) are among the **most prevalent psychiatric conditions worldwide**, affecting individuals' mental health, emotional stability, and daily functioning.

This study aimed to **explore self-reported therapeutic approaches used in the management of AD**, including general **patterns of medication use and non-pharmacological strategies**, with a comparative focus on populations residing in **Portugal (PT) and France (FR)**.

Keywords: anxiety disorders, therapeutic strategies, non-pharmacological interventions, cross-cultural comparison

Materials and Methods



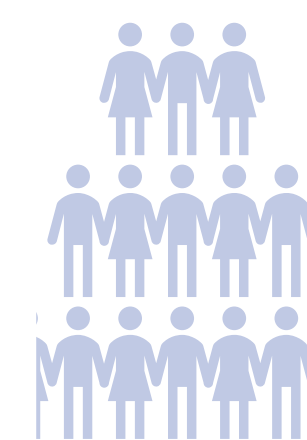
Exploratory questionnaire (Q-TUA):

- Implemented in PT and FR
- Shared on social media (8 jan-1 march 2024)
- Developed for this study but not yet validated



Study approved by the Egás Moniz Ethics Committee (1394, PT152/23)

All participants provided informed consent



N total = **570 participants**

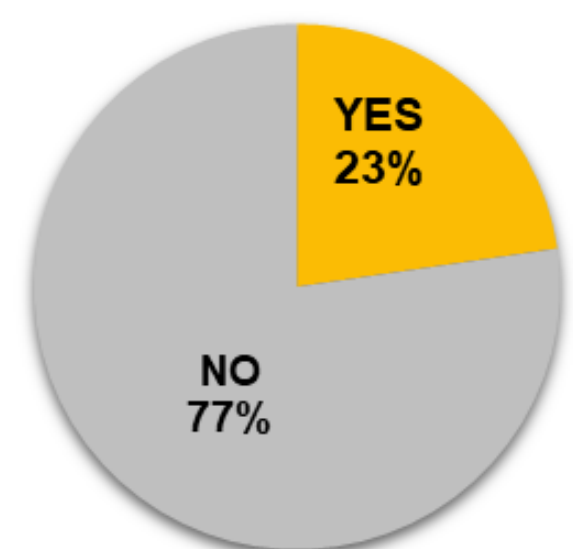
- **398 in Portugal**
- **172 in France**

Exclusion criteria: refusal to participate, age<18 years, absence of PT or FR nationality

Results and Discussion

Sociodemographic parameters	PT (N=398)	FR (N=172)
Gender	79% F, 21% M	78% F, 22%M
Age (mean±SD), years old	18-76 (35±15.6)	18-75 (31±13.5)

In the LAST 3 MONTHS, have you take any medication(s) or supplement(s) for ANXIETY disorders?



Most frequently used drugs for AD:

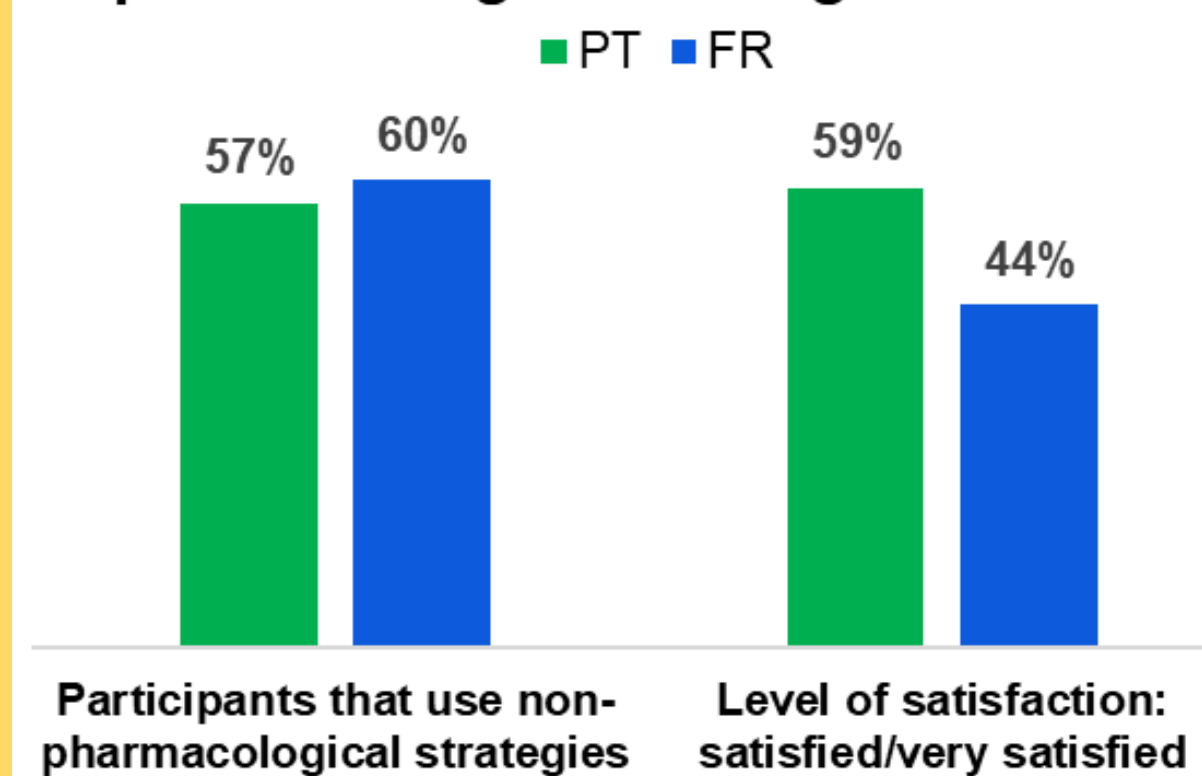
PT

- sertraline
- valerian
- escitalopram

FR

- valerian
- alprazolam
- venlafaxine, oxazepam

Characterization of the use of non-pharmacological strategies for AD



Most common non-drug strategies (PT and FR):

- **relaxation techniques**
- **psychotherapy**
- **Meditation**

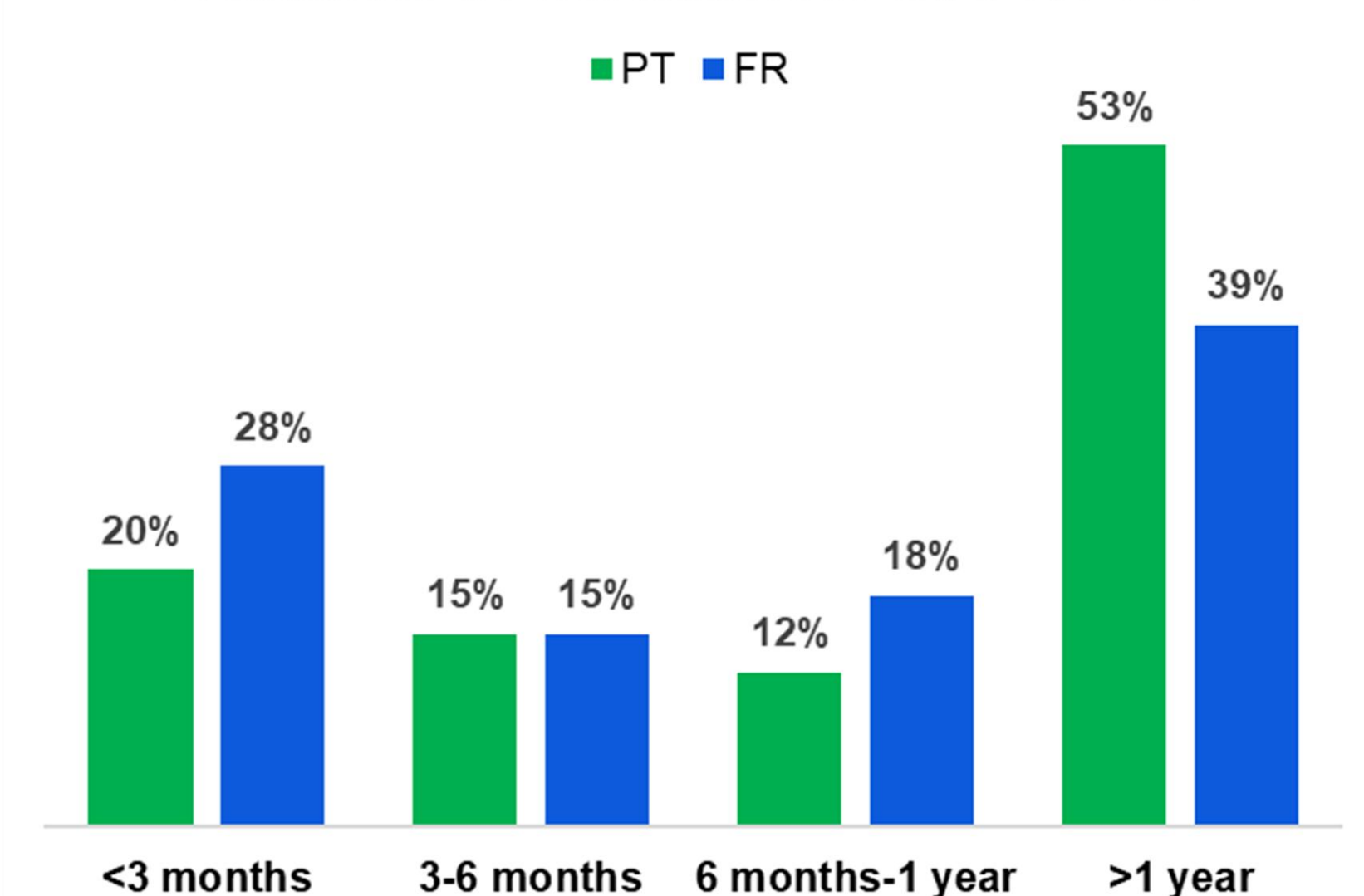
Between-group comparisons:

- **French participants had significantly higher anxiety** ($t(568) = -3.52, p < 0.001$) and **stress** ($t(568) = -3.26, p = 0.001$) scores;

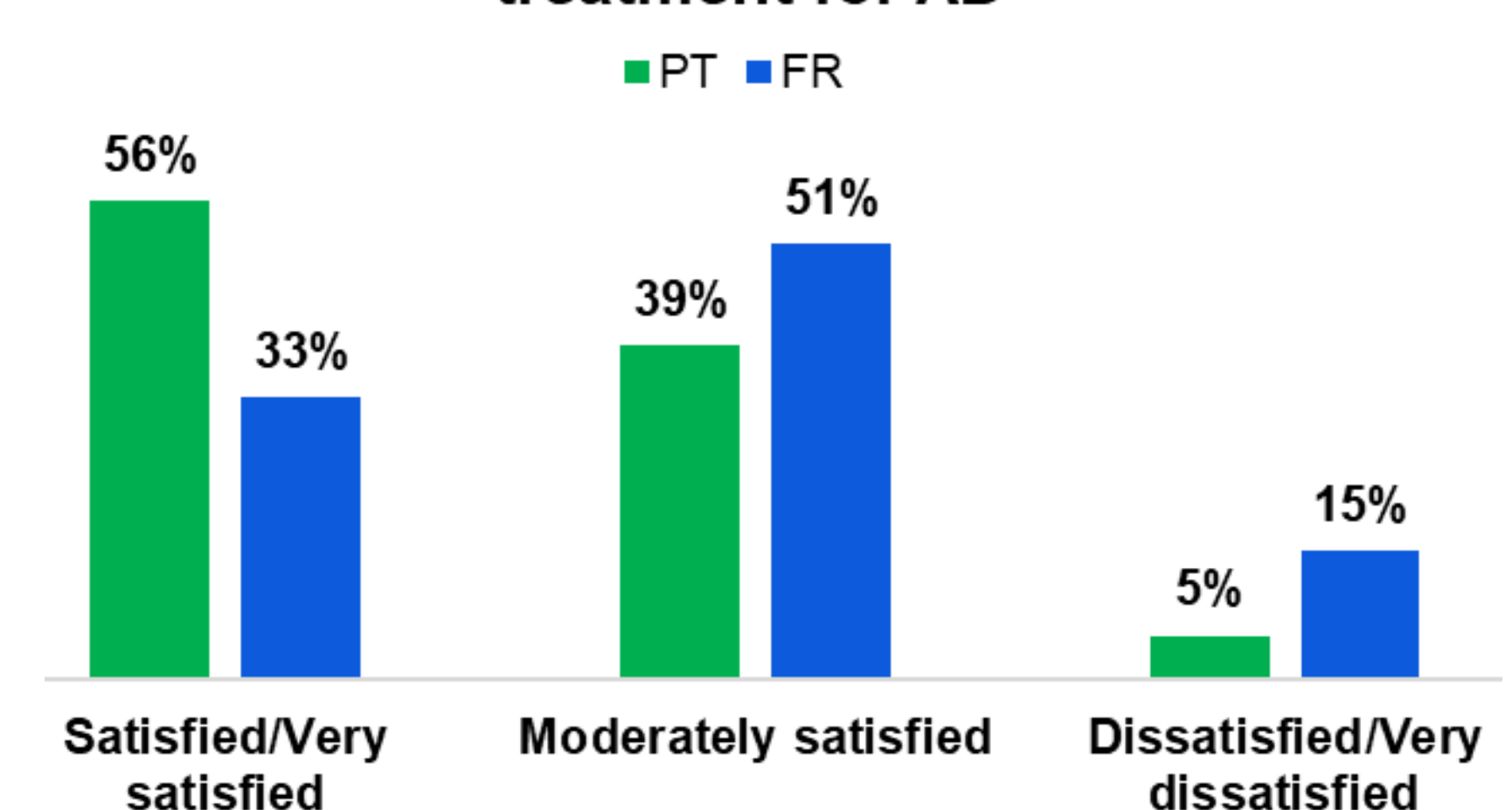
- No significant difference in depression ($t(568) = -1.81, p = 0.071$), indicating nuanced contextual differences

Both groups preferred **long-term pharmacological treatment** and reported **general satisfaction**:

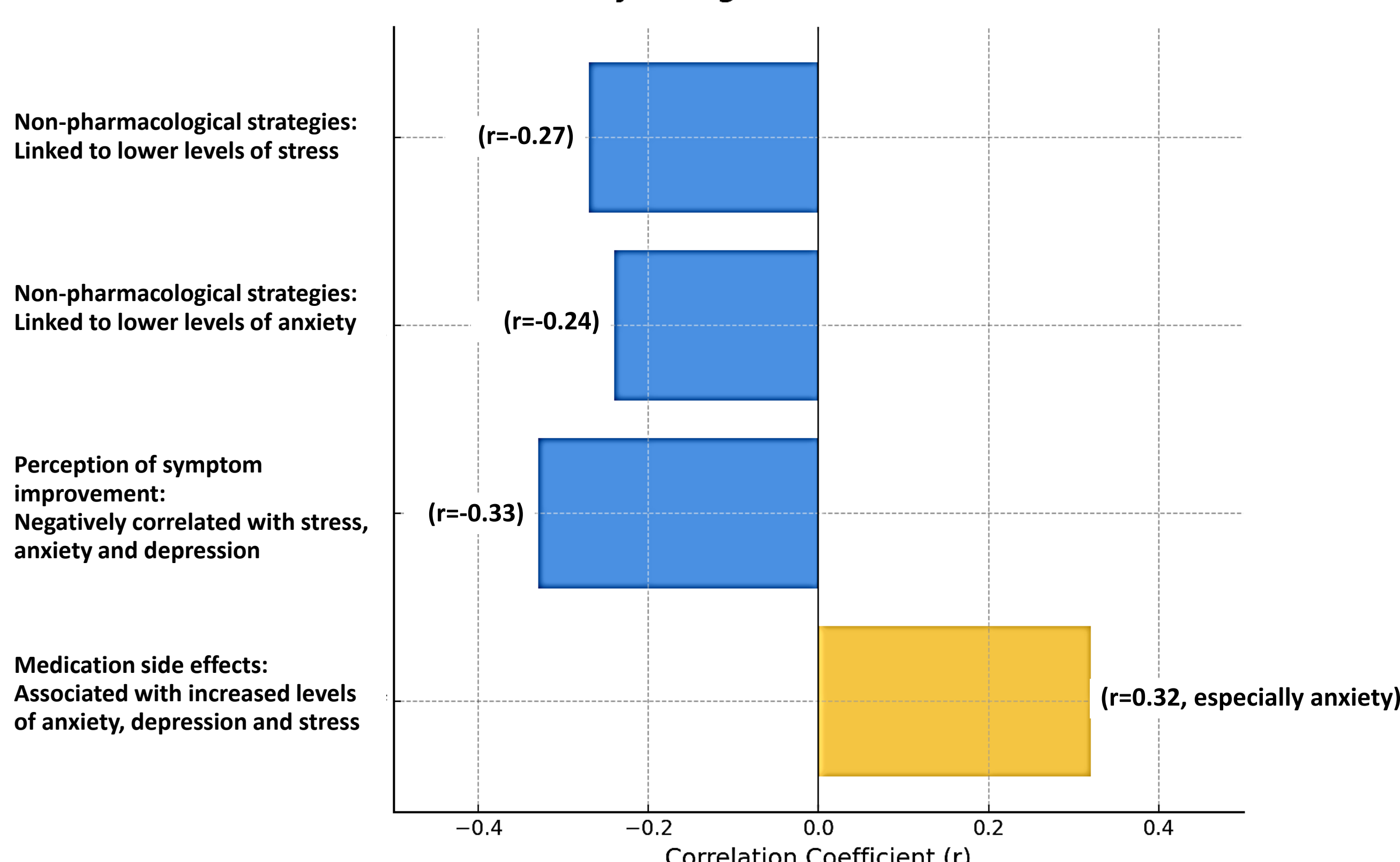
Duration of medication use for AD



Level of satisfaction with pharmacological treatment for AD



Correlations Between Psychological Factors and Mental Health Parameters



Correlations are mainly weak; trends suggest possible sample size limitations affecting correlation strength.

Conclusions

This study:

- Emphasises the **need to tailor mental health interventions to local contexts and individual preferences** (while noting limited clinical depth in the data)
- Reinforces the value of integrative, culturally **informed approaches to managing anxiety disorders**
- Aligns with Horizon Europe 2025–2027 goals, by contributing to cross-national understanding of mental health care

References

Mishra & Varma (2023). Cureus, 15(9), Article e46115. <https://doi.org/10.7759/cureus.46115>
 Ströhle, Gensichen, & Domschke (2018). Deutsches Arzteblatt international, 155(37), 611–620. <https://doi.org/10.3238/arztebl.2018.0611>