

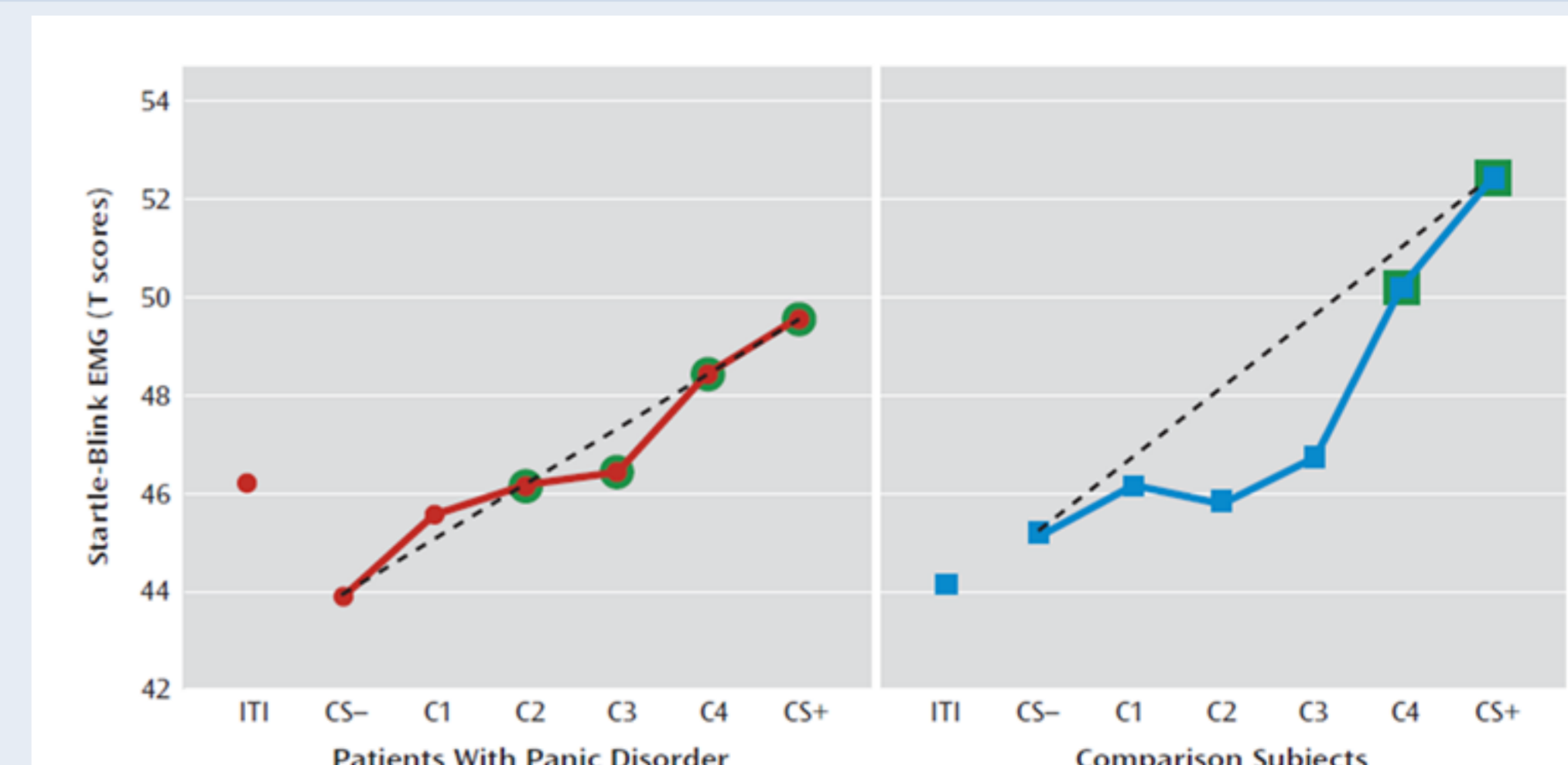
Introduction

Overgeneralization of conditioned fear is associated with anxiety disorders in adults (e.g. Lissek et al., 2010; Lissek & Grillon, 2012; Lissek et al., 2014)

Studies investigating fear generalization in children are rare (e.g. Glenn et al., 2012; Schiele, Reinhard et al., 2016) even though the median onset of most anxiety disorders lies already in childhood (e.g. Beesdo et al., 2010)

Hypotheses:

- (1) generalization in children is negatively correlated with age.
- (2) participants with anxiety disorders would show generally higher responses as well as overgeneralization when compared to healthy controls.



Methods

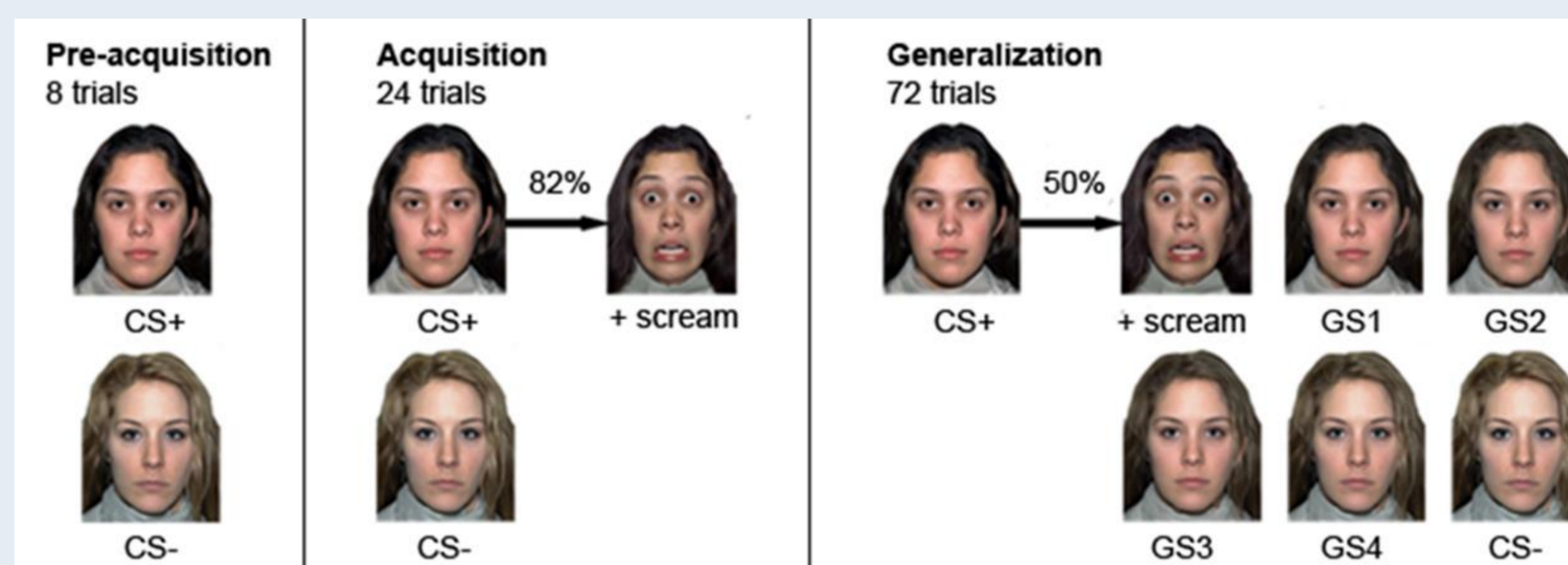
Experiment 1: 133 healthy children and adolescents, aged 8–17 years

Experiment 2: 39 anxiety-disordered children and adolescents compared to 40 healthy controls, aged 10-17 years

Paradigm: discriminative fear conditioning and generalization paradigm (Schiele, Reinhard et al., 2016)

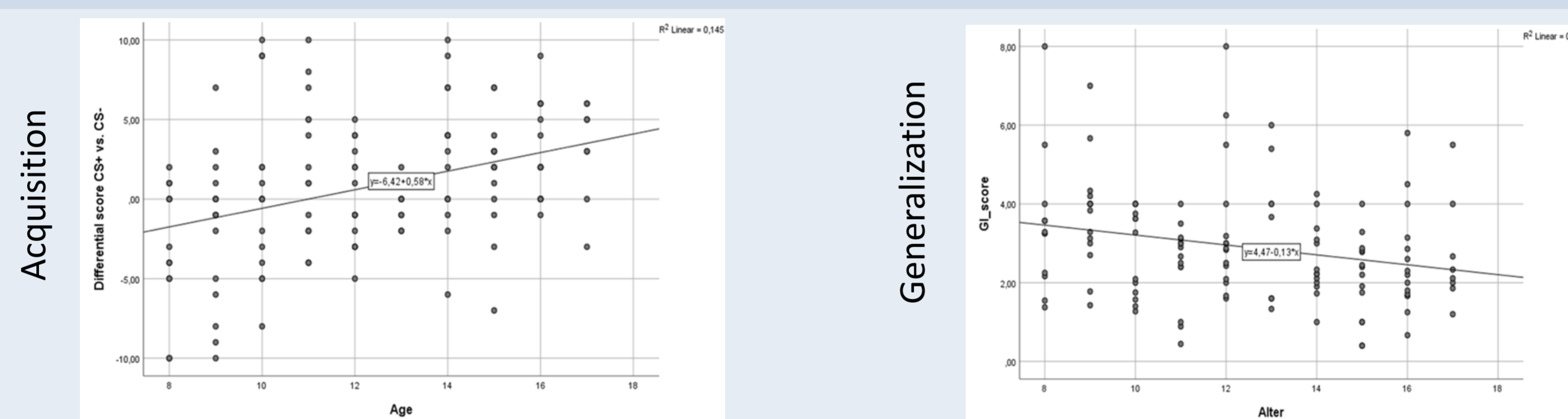
Outcome measures

- Arousal ratings (1 = very calm – 9 = very excited)
- Valence ratings (1 = very unpleasant - 9 = very pleasant)
- UCS expectancy ratings 0-100% in 10% increments (1 = very implausible/zero percent probable – 11 = very sure/100% probable)
- Skin conductance responses (SCR)

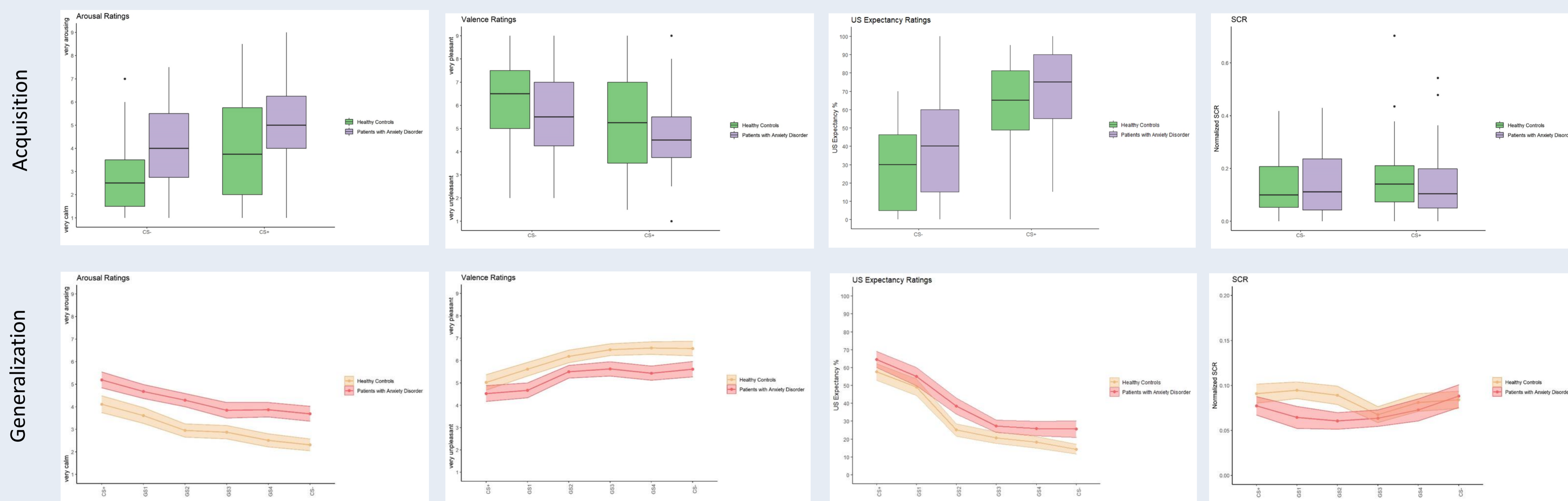


Results

Experiment 1:



Experiment 2:



Conclusions

1. Sig. association between fear learning / generalization and age (8-17y): GI score decreases with increasing age
2. Fear learning/generalization is modulated by anxiety: quantitative not qualitative differences
3. Longitudinal studies are required clarify the role of FG in the development of anx. disorders