

The Role of Prenatal Anxiety Sensitivity on Postpartum Anxiety and Depression

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INTRO

- Anxiety and depression are the most common types of psychopathology in pregnant and postpartum women
- Prenatal and postpartum anxiety and depression can lead to adverse outcomes on both mother and baby including preterm delivery and low birth weight
- Anxiety sensitivity may function to serve as a vulnerability for women to develop anxiety and depression during pregnancy or postpartum

Research Question

- Is anxiety sensitivity a mechanism for understanding postpartum anxiety and depression?

Hypothesis

- We predicted higher prenatal anxiety sensitivity would be associated with postpartum anxiety and depression

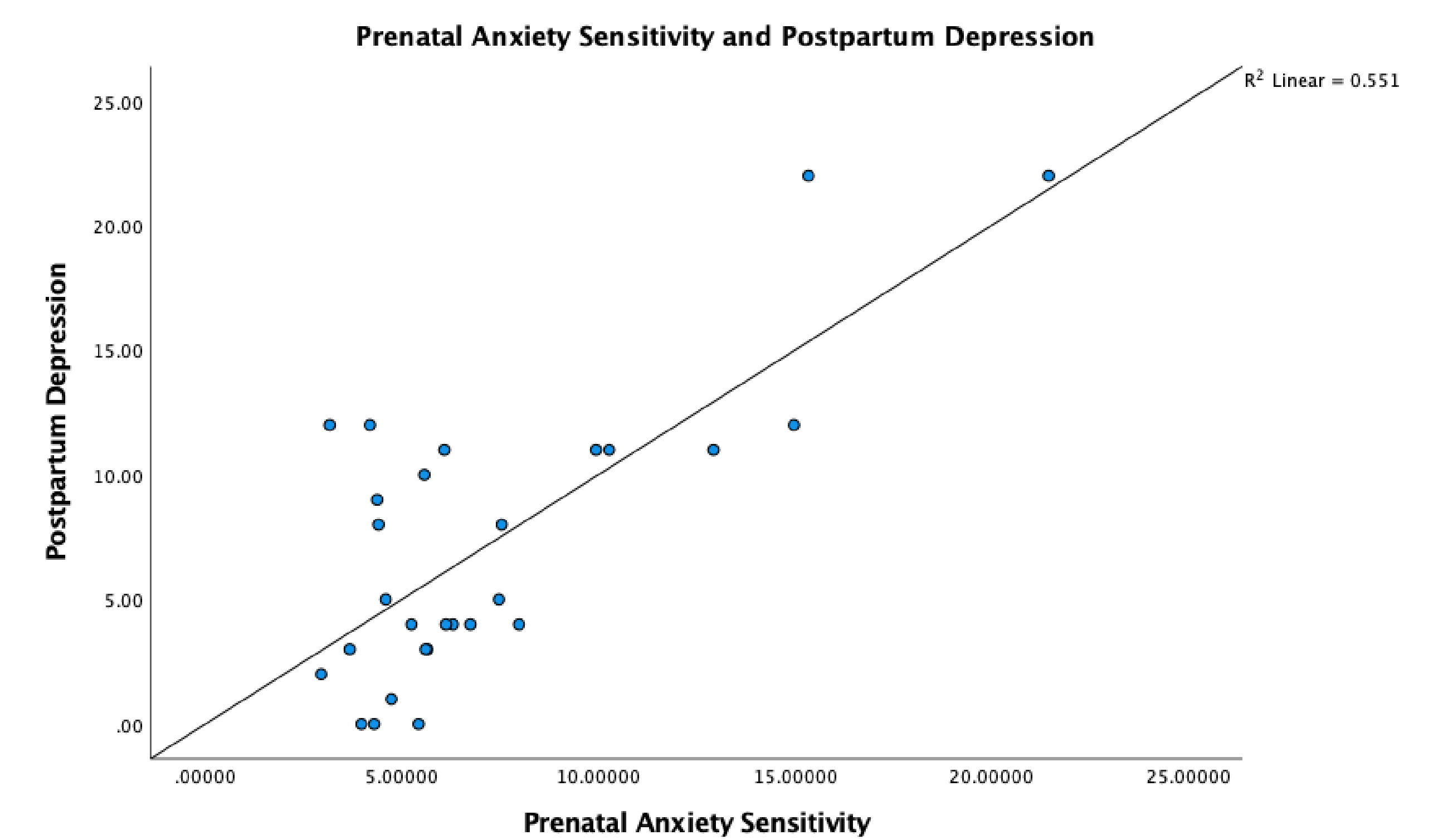
METHOD

- Pregnant women from central Mississippi were recruited for this study
- The sample ($N = 43$; $M_{age} = 30.26$) included 58.1% White and 41.9% African American women
- Participants completed self-report measures of anxiety sensitivity, anxiety, and depression and participants completed clinical interviews during pregnancy and postpartum

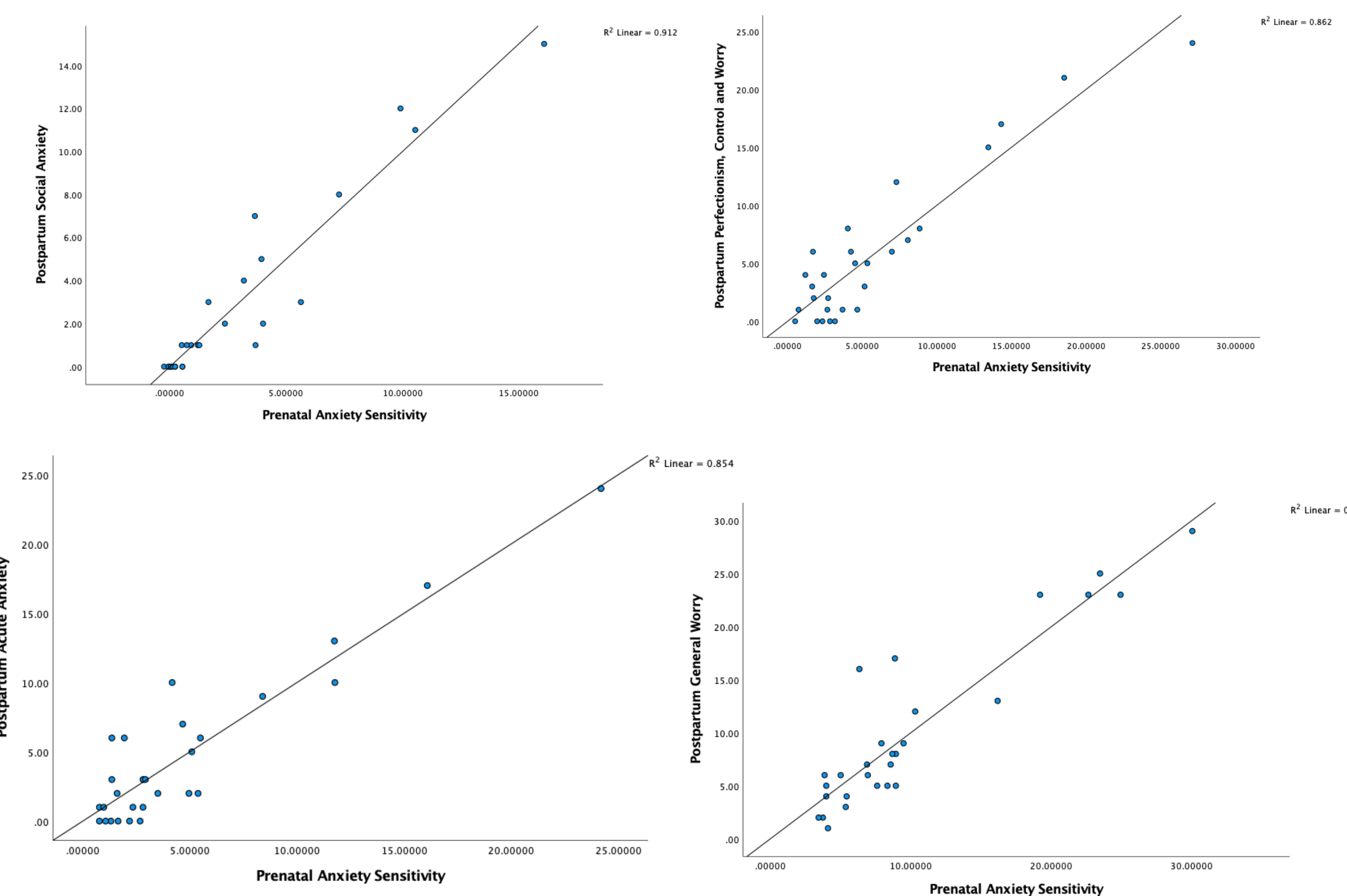
RESULTS

- Anxiety sensitivity accounted for a statistically unique variation for social anxiety, acute anxiety, and anxiety regarding perfectionism, control and trauma
- Results suggested that anxiety sensitivity did not predict postpartum general worry nor postpartum depression

Anxiety sensitivity is important in understanding postpartum mental health



Prenatal Anxiety Sensitivity and Postpartum Anxiety



DISCUSSION

- Higher prenatal anxiety sensitivity is more likely to be associated with postpartum anxiety; however, results were inconclusive in regards to postpartum depression
- Limitations include a small sample and high participant drop out rate, however this preliminary research was necessary to identify a problem
- Though the sample was representative of the state of Mississippi, other minority groups were not represented
- Future research should replicate similar methodology with an increased sample and additional time points
- The current study illustrates the need for health care providers to identify anxiety sensitivity during pregnancy

