RIDER'S ANXIETY IN RELATION TO COMPETITIVE PERFORMANCE

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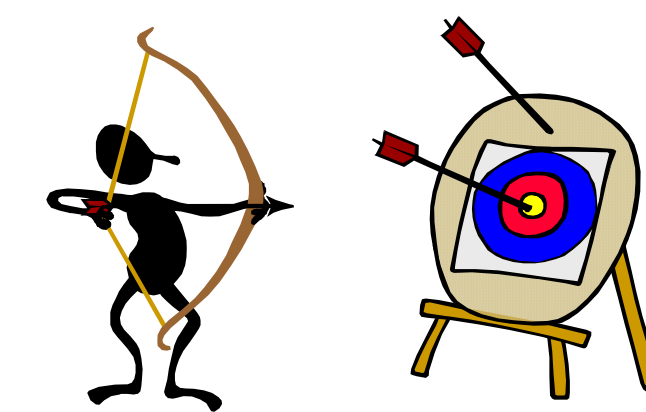**The Swedish National Equestrian Centre, S-734 94 Strömsholm, Sweden.**
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INTRODUCTION

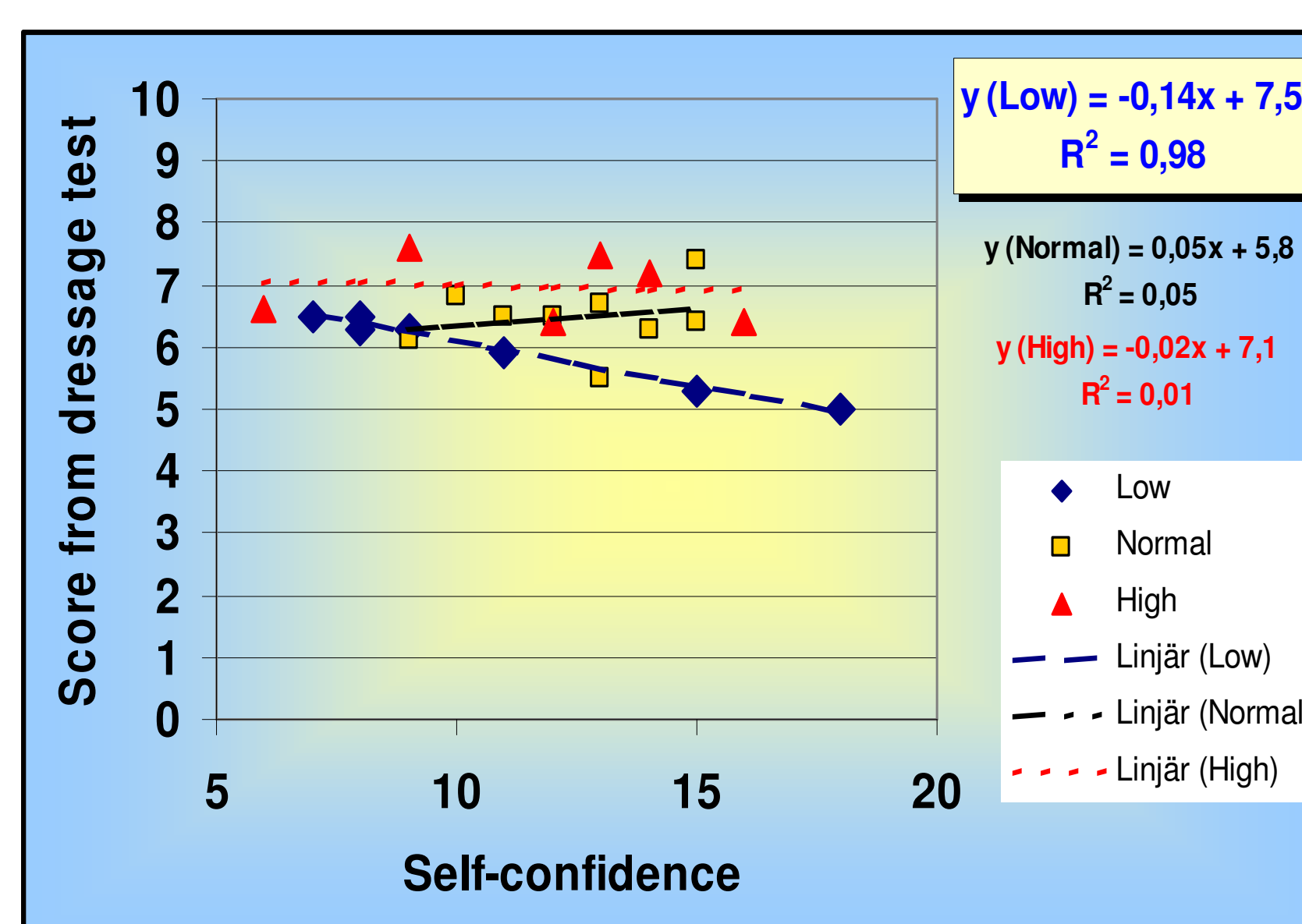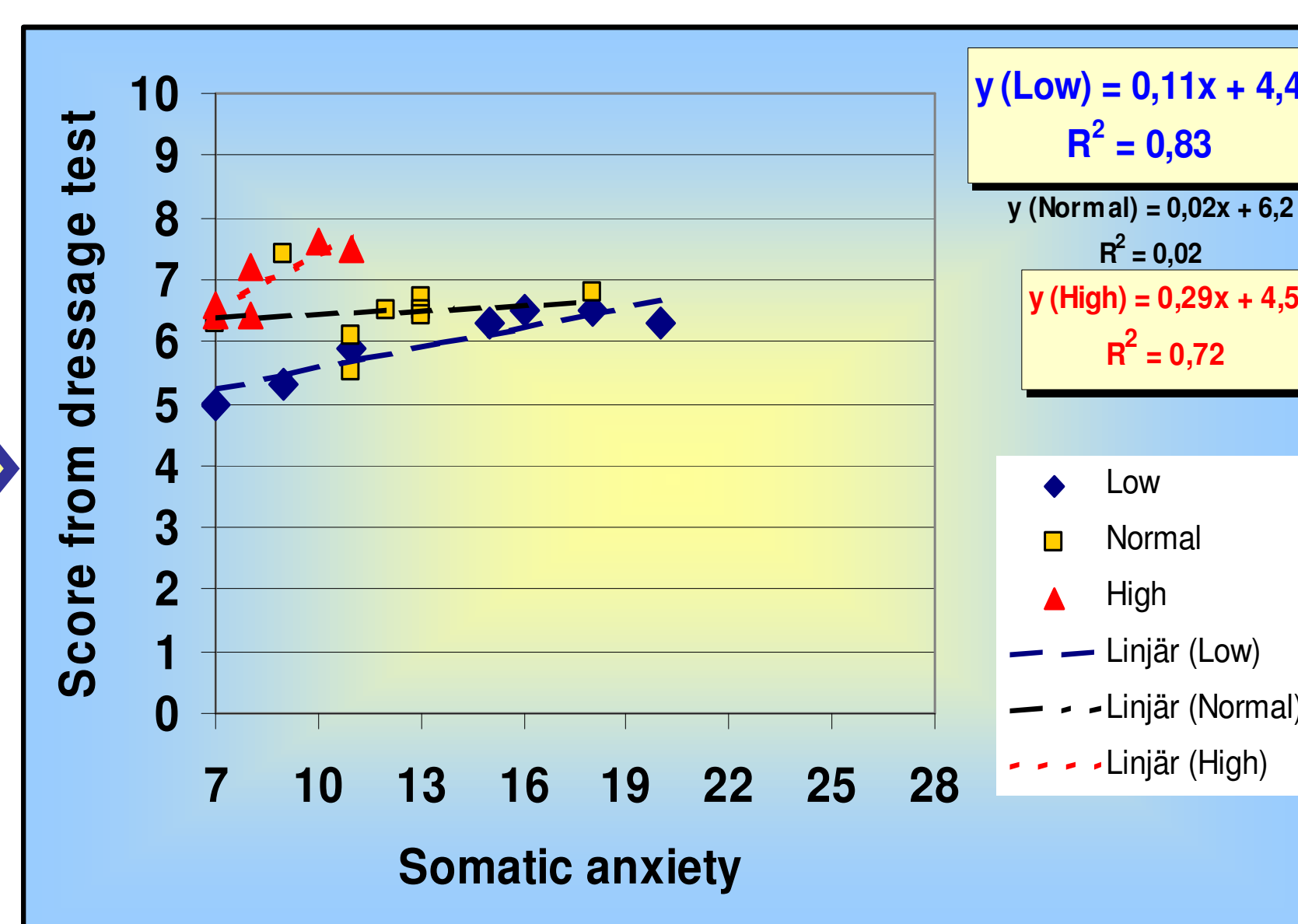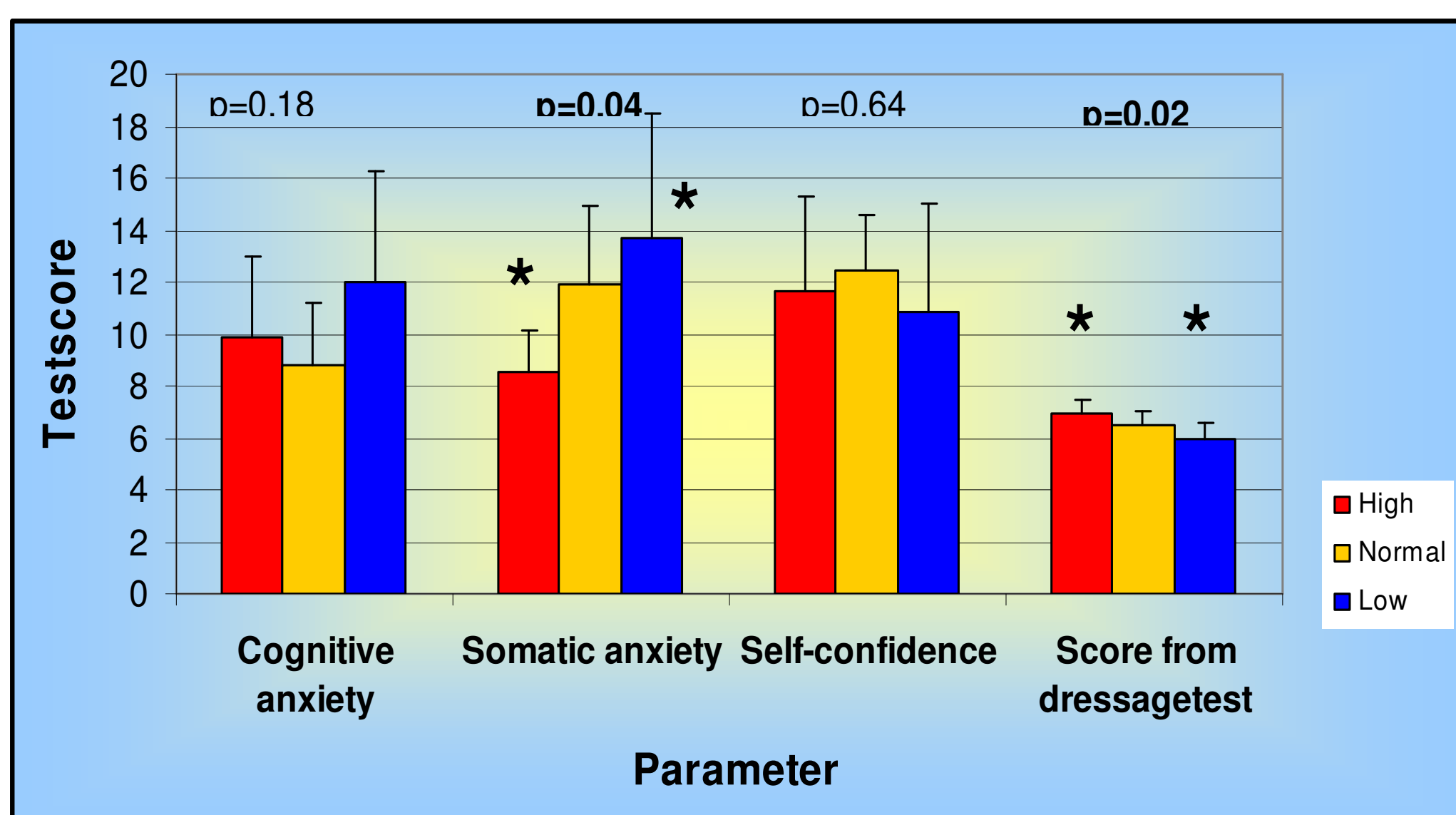High anxiety can impair fine motor skills and affects performance.

Elite riders ahs rated significantly higher in their ability to cope with anxiety than riders at non-elite level.

THE AIM

… was to study the anxiety of less experienced riders in relation to competitive performance.

RESULTS

Bar chart (Testscore vs Parameter): Cognitive anxiety (p=0.18), Somatic anxiety (p=0.04), Self-confidence (p=0.64), Score from dressagetest (p=0.02). Groups: High, Normal, Low.

Scatter plot — Score from dressage test vs Somatic anxiety:
$y\ (Low) = 0.11x + 4.4$, $R^2 = 0.83$
$y\ (Normal) = 0.02x + 6.2$, $R^2 = 0.02$
$y\ (High) = 0.29x + 4.5$, $R^2 = 0.72$
Legend: Low, Normal, High, Linjär (Low), Linjär (Normal), Linjär (High)

Scatter plot — Score from dressage test vs Self-confidence:
$y\ (Low) = -0.14x + 7.5$, $R^2 = 0.98$
$y\ (Normal) = 0.05x + 5.8$, $R^2 = 0.05$
$y\ (High) = -0.02x + 7.1$, $R^2 = 0.01$
Legend: Low, Normal, High, Linjär (Low), Linjär (Normal), Linjär (High)

• The High skilled group had significantly lower somatic anxiety and higher dressage test score than the Low skilled group.

CONCLUSIONS

• Less experienced riders need more support with somatic anxiety, even though somatic anxiety to some extent seems to promote performance.

• Too high self-confidence can impair the performance in less experience riders.

• It's important for the riding teacher to challenge a rider with high self-confidence in order to improve the rider.
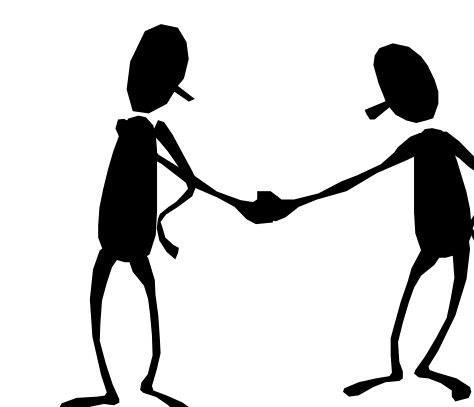
MATERIAL AND METHODS

• 22 high school students (17 yrs) divided by instructor into:
  • "Low skill": n = 7
  • "Normal skill": n = 9
  • "High skill": n = 6

• The rider filled out the sport science instrument CSAI-2R (Competitive State Anxiety Inventory-2Revised) one hour before mounting the horse to estimate:
  • Cognitive anxiety (min 5 – max 20)
  • Somatic anxiety (min 5 – max 20)
  • Self-confidence (min 5 – max 20)

• Performed dressage test on a randomised horse out of a familiar group (n=25-30).

• Data were processed in statistical software SigmaStat with 1-way ANOVA, but also for correlations, means and standard deviations.

• A thesis-project for a BSc of equine studies.

• ISES 2010 Uppsala

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