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# INTERPARENTAL CONFLICT & ADOLESCENT SIBLINGS' ANXIETY IN MILITARY FAMILIES

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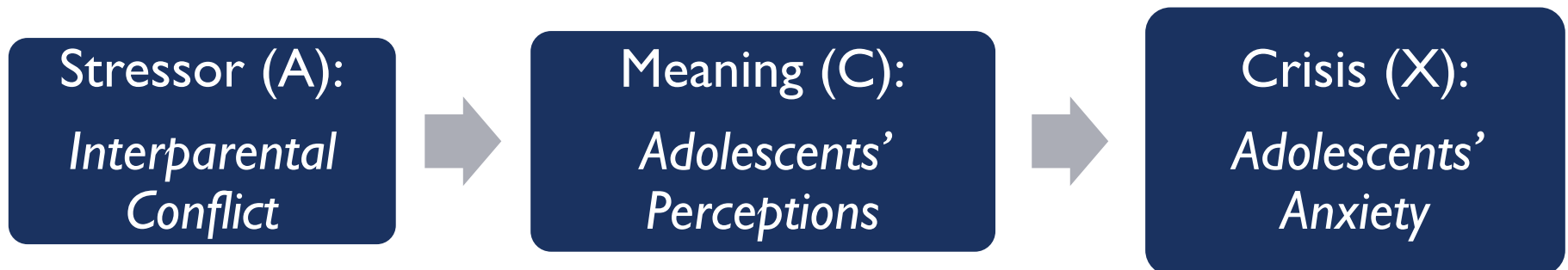


# FAMILY STRESS AND COPING

## Interparental Conflict

- Interparental conflict is associated with child adjustment <sup>3,4</sup>
- This relationship is mediated by child appraisals of that conflict <sup>3,4</sup>
- Military families face unique stressors, and understanding processes within these family systems will help identify intervention points <sup>8,9</sup>

## Application of the ABCX Model of Family Stress & Coping <sup>6</sup>



# STUDY DESIGN

- *Original sample*: 273 military families were recruited from a single active duty Army installation in the United States
- *Inclusion criteria*:

## Parent 1

- Active Duty service member
- 89.7% enlisted
- 86.8% had been deployed in the last year

## Parent 2

- Civilian
- 84% were women

## TWO Adolescents

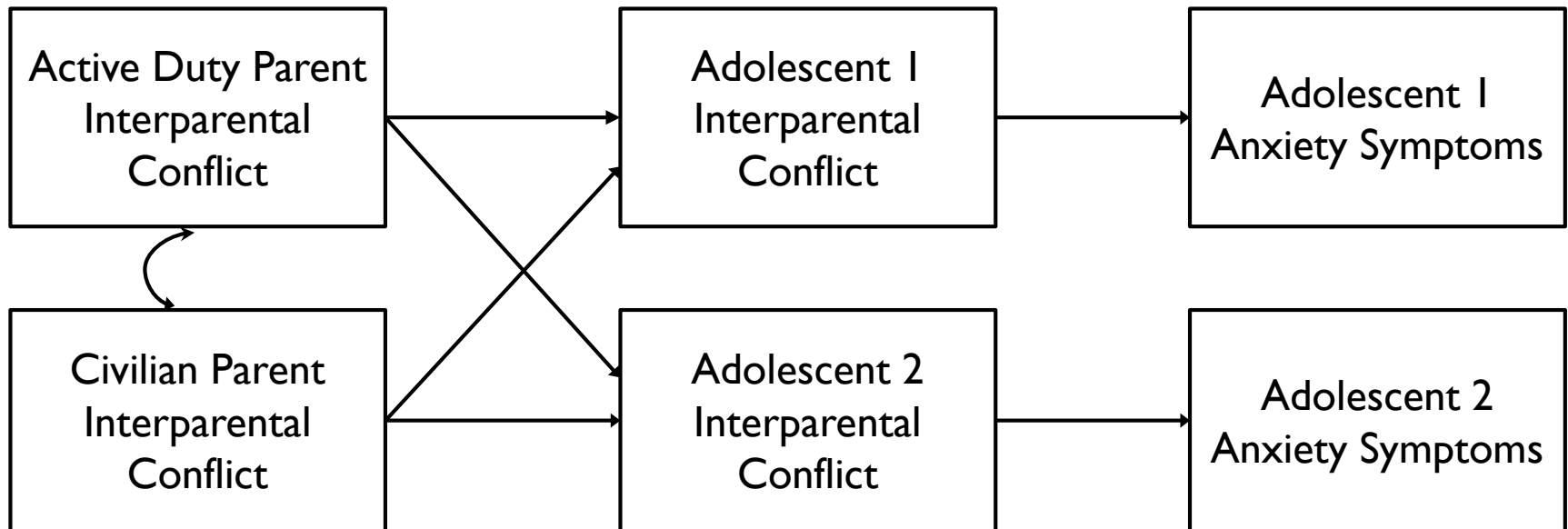
- Adolescent 1: older
- Adolescent 2: younger
- Between ages 11 and 18 ( $M = 13.91, SD = 1.74$ )
- 50.8% were male

- *Final Sample*: 116 families fitting these criteria

Variable	Measure	Example Items	$\alpha$

# HYPOTHESES

When active duty parents (H1) and civilian parents (H2) report higher levels of interparental conflict with their spouse, this will be indirectly associated with higher levels of anxiety for both adolescents in the household; adolescent perceptions of interparental conflict will be the linking mechanism in this relationship.



# ANALYTIC PLAN

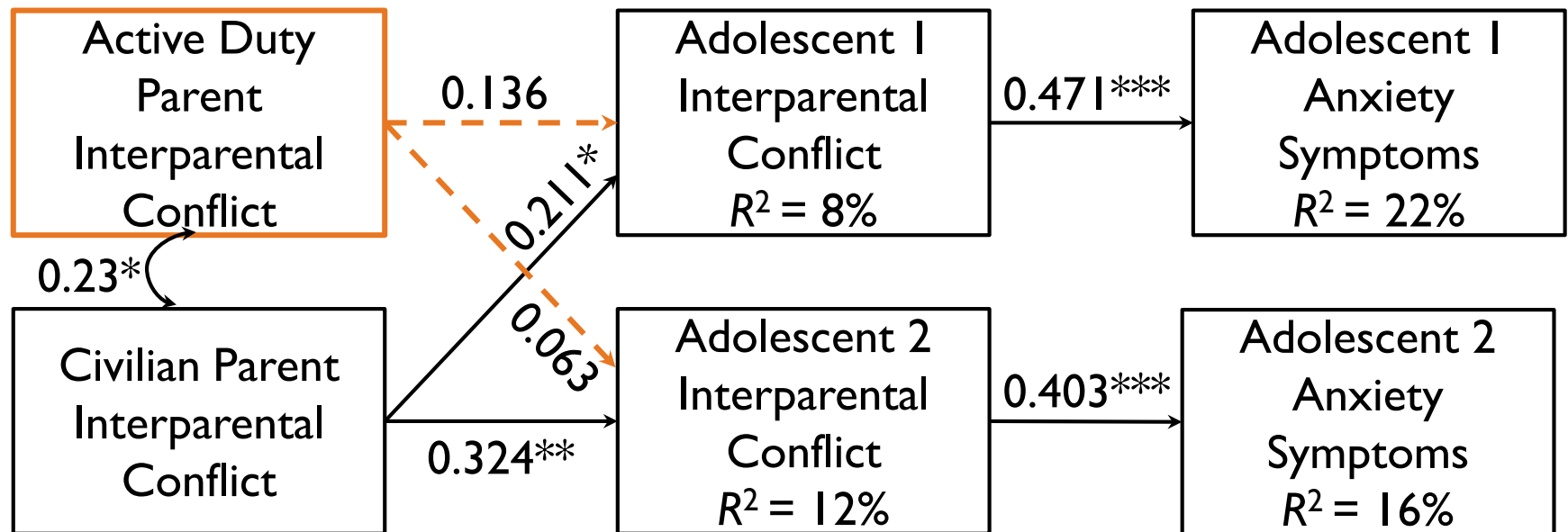
- Structural Equation Model
- Full Information Maximum Likelihood
- Fit indices: Tucker Lewis Index  
Comparative Fit Index  
Root Mean Square Error of Approximation

*Correlation Matrix and Descriptive Statistics for All Study Variables (N=116 families)*

	1	2	3	4	5	6
1. Interparental Conflict (Active duty parent)	-					
2. Interparental Conflict (Civilian parent)	.226*	-				
3. Interparental Conflict (Adolescent 1)	.196	.262*	-			
4. Interparental Conflict (Adolescent 2)	.164	.367**	.328**	-		
5. Anxiety (Adolescent 1)	.053	.083	.485**	.175	-	
6. Anxiety (Adolescent 2)	.000	-.006	.085	.428**	.093	-
Scale Range	1-4	1-4	1-5	1-5	1-3	1-3
Mean	1.81	1.63	2.23	2.13	1.80	1.74
Standard Deviation	.46	.47	.78	.81	.45	.49

*Note.* \* $p < .05$ , \*\* $p < .01$

Hypothesis I (H1): When active duty parents report higher levels of interparental conflict with their spouse, this will be indirectly associated with higher levels of anxiety for both adolescents in the household; adolescent perceptions of interparental conflict will be the linking mechanism in this relationship.



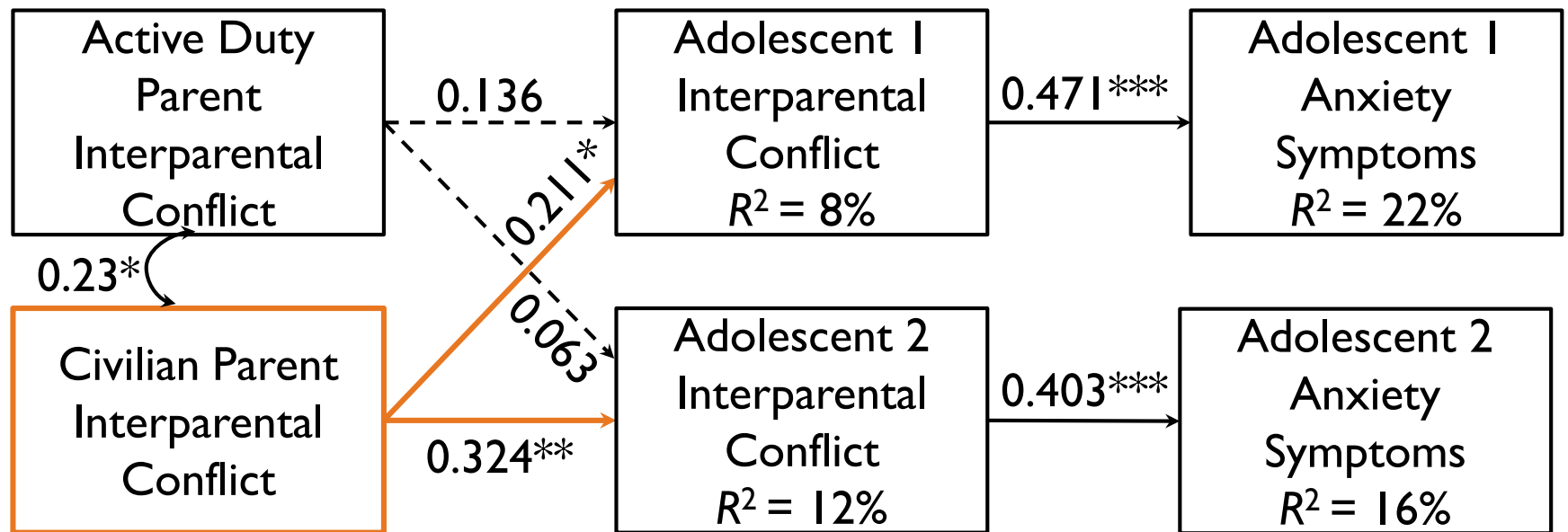
**Figure 1.** Statistical equation model of military families ( $N = 116$ ).

Notes. \*\*\* $p < .001$ , TLI = 0.953, CFI = 0.982, and RMSEA = 0.32,  $p = 0.546$

Standardized estimates are presented. The dashed lines represent non-significant pathways.



Hypothesis 2 (H2): When civilian parents report higher levels of interparental conflict with their spouse, this will be indirectly associated with higher levels of anxiety for both adolescents in the household; adolescent perceptions of interparental conflict will be the linking mechanism in this relationship.

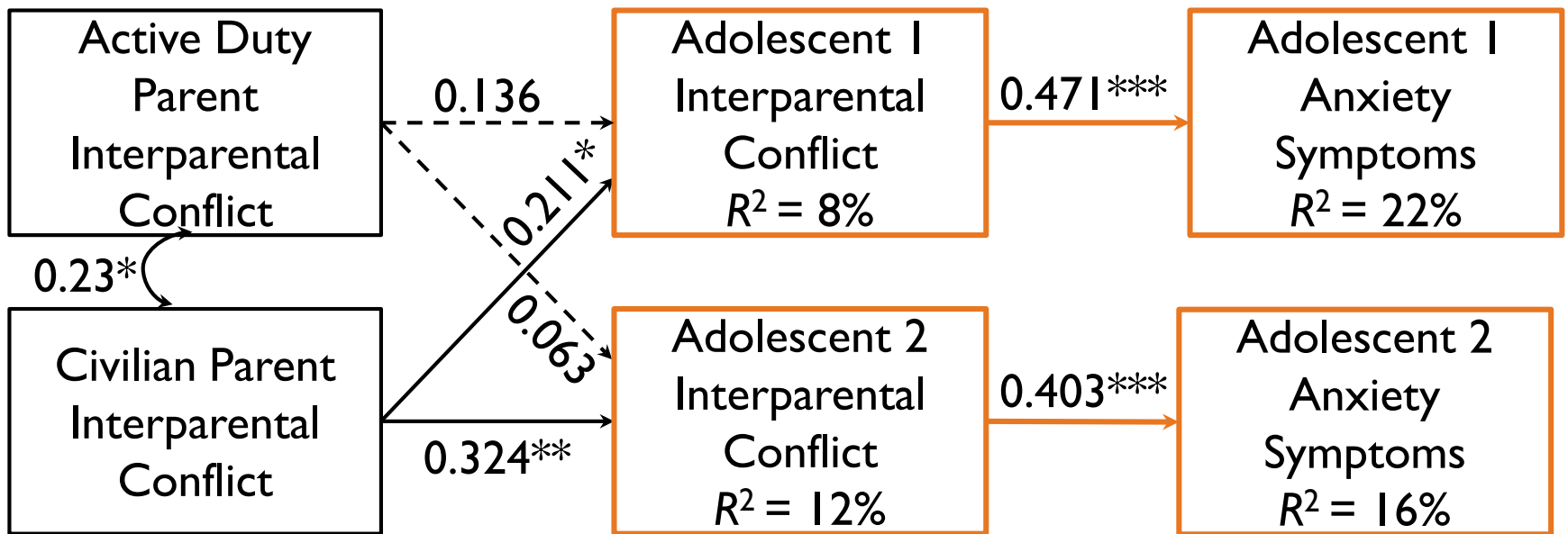


**Figure 1.** Statistical equation model of military families ( $N = 116$ ).

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**Figure 1.** Statistical equation model of military families ( $N = 116$ ).

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# DISCUSSION

## Overall Findings

- The relationship between adolescent perceptions and anxiety<sup>3,4</sup>
- The importance of at-home caregivers<sup>1</sup>

## Strengths

- Multi-informant, family level data
- Two adolescent siblings included
- Within group military family analysis

## Limitations

- Data are cross sectional and self reported
- The “B” in ABCX was not assessed

# IMPLICATIONS

- Supporting the needs of the civilian parent could be leverage point in addressing child anxiety.
- Cultivating healthy interactions between parents has significance for both the family as a whole, and specifically child outcomes.
- Incorporating multiple family members in research, programming, and treatment can enhance the functioning of families overall.



# Thank you for your time!

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