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Excess Anxiety Impacts Attention to External Environment

by Tanya Thomas on June 13, 2010 at 11:33 AM

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A new study at the University of Granada has opined that being of a nervous disposition and being anxious at a given moment negatively impacts our attention to what happens around us even further.

The finding will help improve the treatment of [anxiety disorders](#), so common in our days.

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In fact, anxiety has become one of the most common conditions among the population, which can explain the negative connotations usually associated to this term.

Developed by Antonia Pilar Pacheco-Unguetti and colleagues, the study stated that there are two types of anxiety- trait anxiety, which is a quality of personality that indicates a tendency to feel anxiety and restlessness; and state anxiety, which is an emotional reaction raised in response to a stressful situation or context.

Thus, the later it is of a more immediate and ephemeral nature.

However, the difference between trait and state anxiety has not been identified or established for decades, on the grounds that both types of [anxiety](#) make individuals more receptive to negative information, to the detriment of positive or neutral information.

The researchers have evaluated whether these subtypes of anxiety affect attention differently.

For the study, an attention test prepared by the researchers was provided to some participants with high and low trait anxiety values, and to other groups of students that had been previously induced to a high state of anxiety or to a positive emotional state.

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Anxiety is the abnormal fear or reaction, towards any stress which the person can normally handle. Generalized anxiety involves excessive worry about actual circumstances, events or conflicts. The patient is anxious or apprehensive and may show signs like sweating, palpitation, dry mouth, dizziness, nausea, loss of appetite, frequent urination, difficulty in swallowing.

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