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Study: Anxiety Affects Attention

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GRANADA, Spain, June 14 (UPI) — Anxiety may affect the way in which some people focus their attention on what is happening around them, researchers in Spain said.

Antonia Pilar Pacheco-Unguetti, Alberto Acosta, Alicia Callejas and Juan Lupianez of the University of Granada in Spain said trait anxiety was a quality of personality in which one tends toward being anxious and restless. State anxiety was an emotional reaction to stressful situations.

The study, published in the journal *Psychological Science*, found those with high trait anxiety performed in a way that was deficient in attention. Conversely, the study participants with high state anxiety presented an over-functioning of attention. In particular, they exhibited heightening of the alerting and orienting networks influenced by the processing/analysis of stimuli.

The researchers suggested their finding may help in developing therapies to help patients with anxiety disorders — for instance, in finding ways anxiety disorders patients may cope with distracting information.

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