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## Adult insecure attachment plays a role in hyperarousal and emotion dysregulation in insomnia disorder

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### *abstract*

Studies show that unhelpful cognitive processes play a role in insomnia, whereas interpersonal factors have been less studied in insomnia. Attachment theory can be used as a cognitive-interpersonal framework for understanding insomnia. Because attachment insecurity (vs security) is related to psychiatric disorders the objective was to study the attachment style in insomnia. To this aim sixty-four subjects with Insomnia Disorder (DSM-5) and 38 good sleepers were evaluate in a cross-sectional study with: Attachment Style Questionnaire (ASQ), Arousal Predisposition Scale (APS), *Pre-Sleep Arousal Scale (PSAS)* and Difficulties in Emotion Regulation Scale (DERS). Differences in means between groups were assessed using t-test or Mann-Whitney U/Wilcoxon test. Linear/multiple regression analyses were performed. Subjects with insomnia (mean age 47.1+13 yrs) presented an insecure attachment style and higher scores in all the scales (ASQ, APS, PSAS, DERS  $p < 0.0001$ ) than good sleepers (mean age 48.2+14 yrs). After taking into account anxiety/depressive symptoms, insecure attachment was related to hyperarousal trait ( $p=0.02$ ), pre-sleep hyperarousal ( $p=0.04$ ) and emotion dysregulation ( $p=0.002$ ). In conclusion *subjects with insomnia showed an insecure attachment which was related to hyperarousal trait, pre-sleep hyperarousal and emotion dysregulation. It may intervene in the trajectory of insomnia starting from predisposition to perpetuation. Clinical implications are discussed.*

**Key words:** insomnia, insecure attachment, arousal, emotion dysregulation

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