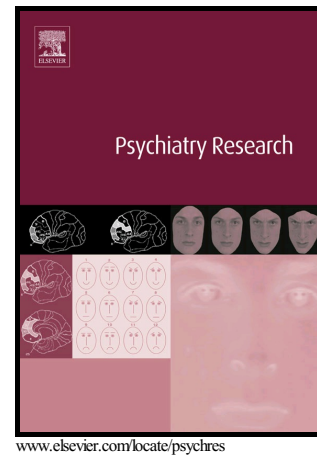


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Stopping the past from intruding the present: Social anxiety disorder and proactive interference

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Abstract:

It has recently been suggested that social anxiety disorder (SAD) entails a deficit in downregulating unwanted (even non-threatening) memories. In the present study we test this hypothesis by comparing a sample of young adults diagnosed with SAD and healthy controls in their ability to resist proactive interference in a working memory task. Where participants performed similarly in the control condition of the memory task, participants with SAD were more susceptible to interference in the experimental condition than the healthy controls. This finding is in line with previous studies that show anxiety to be associated with impoverished executive control and, specifically, suggests that SAD entails a reduced ability to get rid of interfering memories. Clinical implications are discussed.

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