

- Ree, M.J. & Harvey, A.G. (2006). Interpretive Biases in Chronic Insomnia: An Investigation Using a Priming Paradigm. *Behaviour Therapy*.

#### Abstract

Disorder-congruent interpretations of ambiguous stimuli characterize several psychological disorders, and have been implicated in their maintenance. Models of insomnia have highlighted the importance of cognitive processes, but the possibility that biased interpretations are important has been minimally investigated. Hence, a priming methodology was employed to investigate the presence of an interpretive bias in insomnia. A sample of 78 participants, differing in the presence of a diagnosis of insomnia, severity of sleep disturbance and sleepiness, was required to read ambiguous sentences and make a lexical decision about target words that followed. Sleepiness at the time of the experiment altered the likelihood with which participants made insomnia and threat consistent interpretations of ambiguous sentences. The results suggest that there is a general bias towards threatening interpretations when individuals are sleepy and suggests that cognitive accounts of insomnia require revision to include a role for interpretative bias when people are sleepy. Future research is required to investigate whether this interpretive bias plays a causal role in the maintenance of insomnia.