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## Emotional Bias in Childhood-Event Interpretation by Adults with Generalized Anxiety Disorder

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### ABSTRACT

**Objectives:** It is often stressed that anxiety alters perceptions of the world by way of processes like the rapid detection of threats and the exaggeration of risks. Given that these processes are active during all information processing, they are thought to influence not only the interpretation of current events, but also the recall of past events. In patient's anamnesis, we have often attempted to incorporate the events that patients recollect into our functional explanation of their disorder, forgetting that the meaning of what a patient relates may be intrinsically linked to his/her pathology and pathological functioning. We are interested here in potential biases in the events remembered by anxious patients. **Methods:** We contacted twenty-seven men aged 25 or older suffering from generalized anxiety disorder. They were asked to recollect childhood events from cue words and then rate each remembered event on its subjective emotional valence and intensity, its frequency of recollection, and the vividness of the memory. The responses of the anxious subjects were compared to those of control subjects without psychiatric disorders. **Results:** Findings seem to show that anxious patients' memories of childhood events may be impaired by emotional interpretation biases. Indeed, anxious patients remember more negative events than participants in the control group. The emotional intensity of negative or positive events remembered by anxious patients is also considered more important.

### KEYWORDS

Generalized Anxiety; Childhood Events; Emotional Interpretation Biases

### Cite this paper

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