

## **Abstract**

In the present study, the time course and gender difference of attentional bias for angry faces in 60 secondary school adolescents from age 12 to 20 were examined. We investigated the pattern of moderation effects of picture exposure duration and gender on anxiety related attentional bias. Using a visual-probe task, participants were shown pairs of angry and neutral faces over seven exposure durations, from 80 ms to 1500 ms. Results revealed vigilance towards threat among control participants in the 80 ms condition, and among the high anxious participants in the 500 ms condition. Such attentional bias of the anxious group dissipated with increasing picture exposure duration. Vigilance for threat reflected facilitated engagement and does not reflect difficulty in disengaging from threat. In the 500 ms condition, high anxious female showed delayed disengagement from threat, while high anxious male showed facilitation in disengaging from threat. We discussed our results with regards to findings from studies of attentional biases in anxious adults, and the need for future studies.

**Keywords:** Attentional bias; Exposure duration; Gender difference; Angry faces; Anxiety.