

## **ABSTRACT**

**THESIS:** The Influence of Anxiety Sensitivity on Sleep Quality

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Sleep is important to overall wellbeing. Mental health and sleep likely have a bi-directional relationship, wherein sleep problems are both causal factors and consequences of psychiatric conditions (Krystal, 2012). This study specifically examined the relationship of anxiety sensitivity, conceptualized as a fear of anxiety symptoms (Reiss, 1991), to sleep problems. Those with higher anxiety sensitivity may be more worried about the negative effects of poor sleep quality, which could interfere with their ability to fall asleep (Baker et al., 2017; Harvey, 2002). Furthermore, the role of body-mass index (BMI) was examined; people who are overweight or obese may be at a greater risk for anxiety and other mental illness (Zhao et al., 2009). They also are at a greater risk for obstructive sleep apnea (Jehan et al., 2017), which in turn is related to higher anxiety (Rezaeitalab et al., 2014). To examine these relationships, participants were recruited from Ball State University and through social media to respond to measures assessing trait anxiety, anxiety sensitivity, BMI, sleep quality, and demographics. Those with higher BMIs, trait anxiety, and anxiety sensitivity were expected to report greater sleep dysfunction. It was hypothesized that anxiety sensitivity would moderate the trait anxiety–sleep quality and BMI – sleep quality relationships. While anxiety sensitivity and trait anxiety significantly predicted sleep quality in a hierarchical linear regression, anxiety sensitivity did not

moderate the trait anxiety – sleep quality relationship. Exploratory analyses revealed that anxiety sensitivity did moderate the trait anxiety-sleep quality relationship for the college participants, but not the non-college participants, suggesting that age may be an important factor in these relationships. Additionally, BMI was not found to be related to anxiety sensitivity or sleep quality, and anxiety sensitivity did not moderate the relationship between BMI and sleep quality.