

Looking at links between depression and insomnia

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People with both insomnia and depression who have found anti-depressants ineffective can draw hope from a new study currently recruiting in Melbourne.

Led by Doctorate of [Clinical Psychology](#) candidate Damon Ashworth and Associate Professor Shantha Rajaratnam of Monash University's School of Psychology and [Psychiatry](#), the study is further examining the well-established link between sleep disorders and [depression](#).

"New information is suggesting that, in some cases, insomnia pre-dates and leads to the [depressive episode](#)," Mr. Ashworth said.

"Even if the depression is treated, with anti-depressants or other

methods, the sleep disorder remains. The pre-existing, untreated insomnia may actually hamper efforts to treat the depression, and can lead to relapse, even in cases where there has been an improvement."

The current trial, a collaboration between Monash University, Monash Medical Centre and the Melbourne Sleep Disorder Centre, is seeking people who have not experienced as significant an improvement as they had hoped from anti-depressants.

It aims to see whether treating patients' insomnia lessens the severity of their depression.

"We know that insomnia and depression are highly interlinked. Previously, research has found that treating both sleep disorders and depression at the same time was effective. However, it wasn't clear which treatment was leading to the improvement," Mr. Ashworth said.

"With this trial we are trying to better understand the relationship between depression and insomnia and develop a new, holistic treatment approach that will ultimately lead to the best long-term outcomes for patients."

Participants in the study would need to monitor their sleeping patterns and undertake four fifty-minute sessions of sleep education or Cognitive Behavioural Therapy for Insomnia (CBT-I).

The CBT-I sessions would cover why [insomnia](#) occurs, behavioral and cognitive techniques to combat it, as well as relaxation sessions. Mr Ashworth advised that all these techniques have been shown to be helpful in dealing with [sleep disorders](#).

More information: If you are interested in taking part in the study, please see the [study website](#) for more information and participation

criteria.

Provided by Monash University

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