

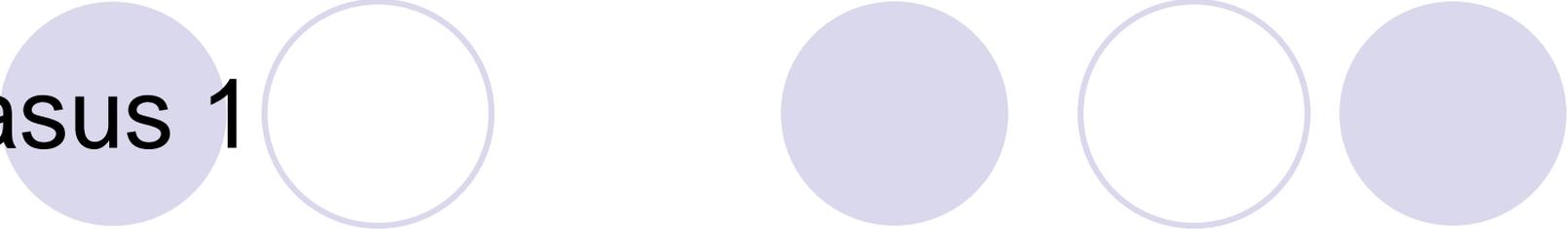


# Expatriate blues: Homesickness

Ad Vingerhoets

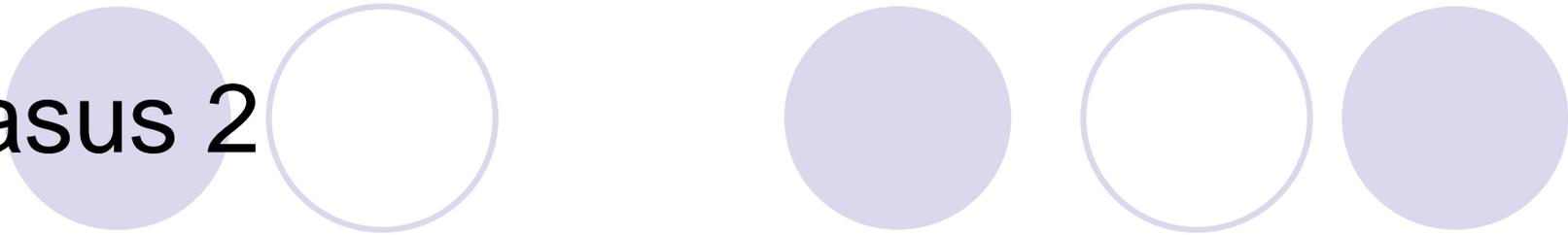
Department of Medical and Clinical Psychology  
Tilburg University

# Casus 1

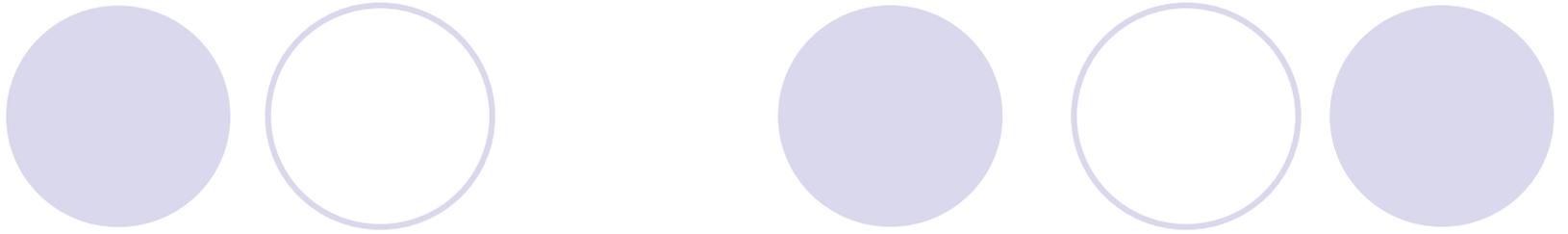


- .....My age is now 56 years and I have suffered from homesickness since my early childhood. With increasing age, it just became worse.
- As a young child, I already found out that I did not long for people (you can always be in touch with them, calling, writing) but I missed my own private physical place, my own stuff, my cats.
- Three times I ran away when I was hospitalized, because I missed my home so much that it seriously interfered with the recovery process.
- It was really fortunate that the doctors and nurses understood my problems and let me go home.

# Casus 2



- My whole life (I am now 55) I have suffered from homesickness. By applying all kind of avoidance strategies and coping mechanisms, I succeeded to deal with it to some extent (always being accompanied by friends and/or my children, traveling not too far, etc.)
- Recently, I went on a vacation trip with my husband. The only thing I did was crying, I was not able to drink or eat, I only wanted to go back home. After 3 days, we flew back home.



The past.....

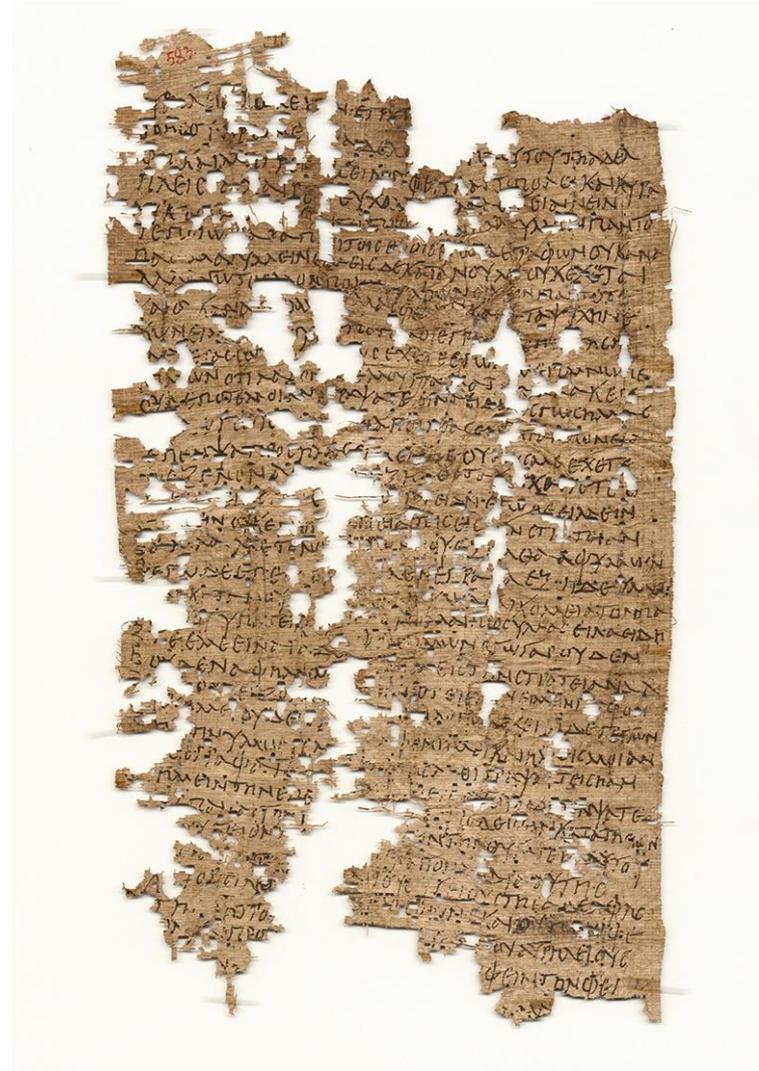
# Some early descriptions of homesickness



- Bible (Psalm 137, 1): By the rivers of Babylon, there we sat down, yea, we wept, when we remembered Zion. And how shall we sing the Lord's song in a strange land.
- Homer's Odyssey (Book X): When Odysseus told his crew that the sorceress Circe did not let them travel home immediately: 'They were broken-hearted and threw themselves on the ground groaning and tearing their hair, but they did not mend matters by crying.'
- The Greek physician Hippocrates (ca. 460-377 BC) regarded homesickness as the result of an excess of black bile in the blood. He noted that when people from the mountains, plains, or prairies settled in another country, a terrific perturbation often stroke them and that from the moment of birth people seemed to be impregnated by topographical influences.

# An 1800 year old letter from an Egyptian soldier who suffered from homesickness

Researchers discovered this 1800 year old letter from an Egyptian soldier in the Roman army, somewhere in Europe. The letter was directed to his inmates and the used words are very similar to the words that dispatched soldiers nowadays use to express their feelings and experiences abroad.



# Johannes Hofer

(1669-1752)

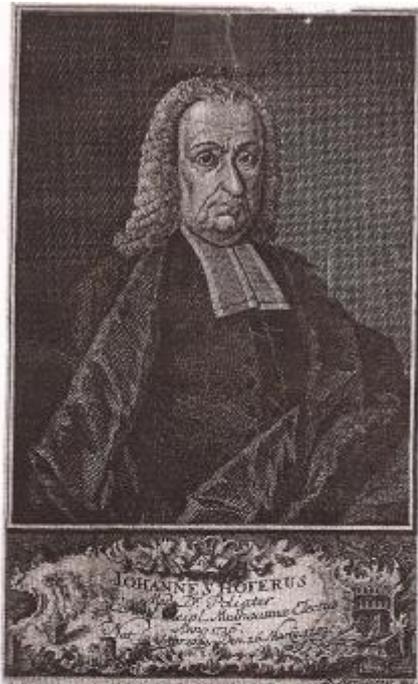
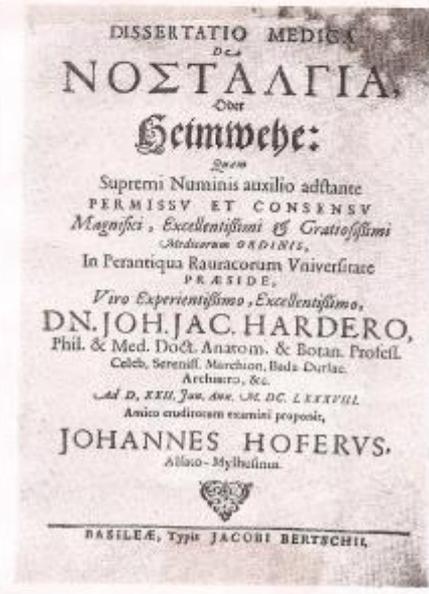


FIG. 1. PORTRAIT OF JOHANNES HOFER (1669-1752)



- Introduced the term *nostalgia*, derived from the Greek words *nostos* (“return”) and *algos* (“pain”), as a direct translation of the German word *Heimweh* (also referred to as the “Swiss disease”). In the Netherlands, the term “heimwee” was used.
- His thesis was based on two case studies: a medical student originating from Mulhouse (France) and a servant girl. The student reportedly first suffered low spirits before ‘fall[ing] victim to this disease’ and the girl developed *nostalgia* in the hospital and could only repeat ‘Ich will heim; Ich will heim’, refusing any treatment.
- Homesickness was seen as a “cerebral” (i.e., neurological) disease. It was believed to be potentially fatal if left untreated.



J. J. Scheuchzer (1672-1733), a Swiss physician, naturalist and contemporary of Hofer, posited that nostalgia was attributable to fluctuations in barometric air pressure, a question of climate, elevation and geographical displacement among young Swiss mountain dwellers.

His proposal for treatment: if homesick patients could not be consoled or sent back up familiar slopes, they should be confined atop nearby hills or even in towers—anything that might expose them to lighter air.

As a last resort, saltpeter and young wine could be administered to help compress air within the body and thus counteract the atmosphere's oppressive pressure.

A *Ranz des Vaches* or *Kuhreihen* is a simple melody traditionally played on the horn by the Swiss Alpine herdsmen as they drove their cattle to or from the pasture. The *Kuhreihen* was linked to the Swiss nostalgia and Homesickness (also known as *mal du Suisse* "Swiss illness" or *Schweizerheimweh* "Swiss homesickness"). This music "when played in foreign lands, produces on a Swiss an almost irrepressible yearning for home".

Singing of *Kuhreihen* was forbidden to Swiss mercenaries because the induced nostalgia could lead to desertion, illness, or death. The 1767 *Dictionnaire de Musique* by Jean-Jacques Rousseau claims that Swiss mercenaries were threatened with severe punishment to prevent them from singing these Swiss songs.



# 1761: A disease called "nostalgia" torments soldiers

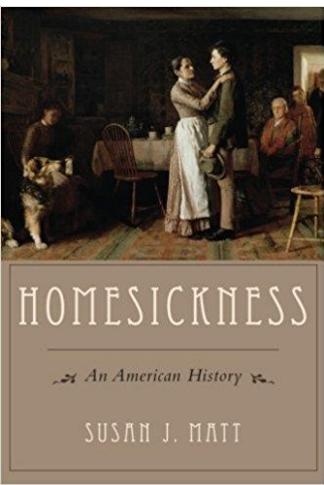
- "When young men who are still growing are forced to enter military service and thus lose all hope of returning safe and sound to their beloved homeland, they become sad, taciturn, listless, solitary, musing, full of sighs and moans. Finally, they cease to pay attention and **become indifferent to everything which the maintenance of life requires of them**. This disease is called nostalgia. Neither medicaments, nor arguments, nor promises, nor threats of punishment can produce any improvement."
- Austrian physician Josef Leopold Auenbrugger (1722-1809) "Inventum Novum."



# Homesickness in the USA



- Homesickness was widespread during the American Civil War. Wartime letters and diaries, as well as post-war memoirs and reminiscences, reveal much about the emotional sensitivity of Civil War fighting men towards their homes.
- Susan J. Matt, a US historian, quotes from letters and diaries of European settlers and soldiers in the Civil War
  - Oh aunty...the tears come down so fast that I can hardly write
  - I am not the only one that is crying to see the wife and baby
  - I broke down with genuine homesickness and burst out into a flood of tears



# More men *die* of homesickness than all other diseases

Cyrus F. Boyd

A 19 century soldier from Iowa

## A DEATH FROM NOSTALGIA

The Case of Private Atkins, Who  
Died of Homesickness, Re-  
garded as Remarkable.

## ONE OF THE RAREST DISEASES

Dr. E. C. Spitzka, Specialist on Ner-  
vous Disorders, Says It Is Next  
to Impossible for an Amer-  
ican to Have It.

# The size of the problem.....

- A medical report from 1864 in the Confederate States Medical and Surgical Journal, the only journal of its kind published under the Confederacy, noted **many** Confederate soldiers convalescing in Virginia hospitals were “oppressed with nostalgia”.
- .....the Surgeon General reported, there were **572** cases of nostalgia among troops. Those numbers rose in subsequent years, peaking in the year ending in June 1863, after the draft had begun. That year more than **2000** men were listed as suffering from nostalgia; **12** succumbed to it. The year with the most fatalities was 1865, when **24** men died of the disease. In all, between 1861 and 1866, **5537** Union soldiers suffered homesickness acutely enough to come to a doctor’s attention, and **74** died of it.
- Note: it cannot be excluded that they died from a disease that was at that time not yet known

# USA: WW I



## Forgotten

Far from home, in a strange land, enduring hardships and facing danger, that is when a lonesome, homesick man needs the encouragement of a bright, cheery, newsy letter from a shopmate or friend.

You'll be proud to know him when he comes back. Keep up your correspondence, so that you can greet him as a true friend—not as a shirker.

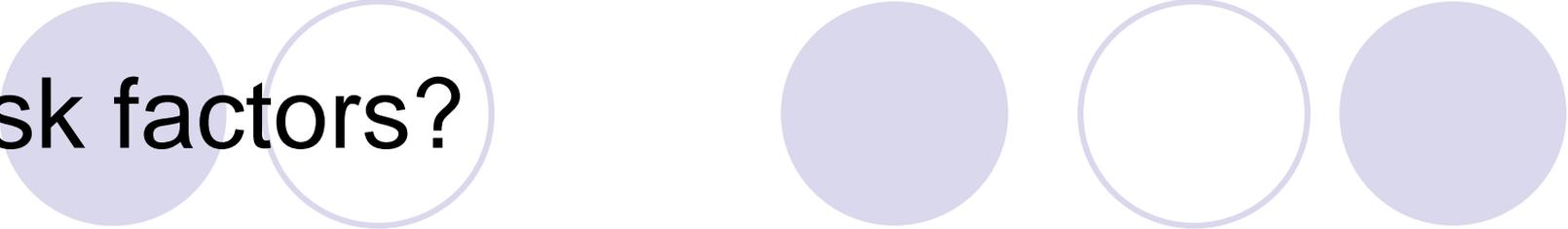
Ask the News for his address if you have forgotten it.

You Write

He'll Fight



# Risk factors?

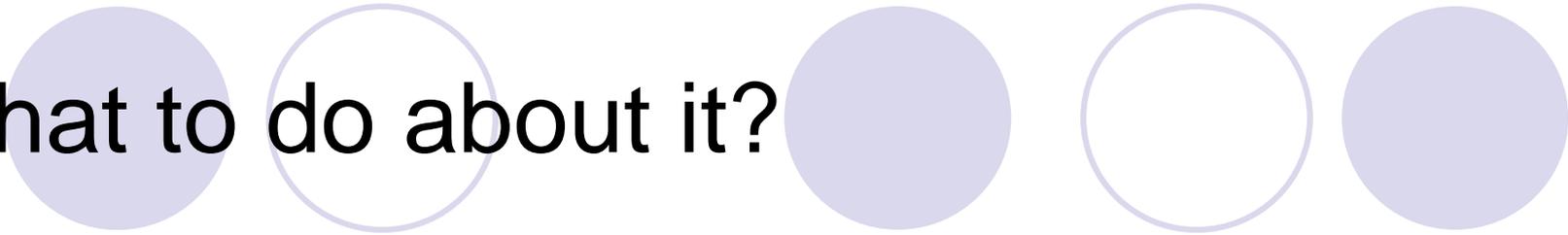


- Within the Army, homesickness seemed more present in certain subgroups. Some doctors pointed to **young recruits**, venturing far from home for the first time. Others claimed that **middle-aged men**, long accustomed to the comforts of domestic life, missed them most acutely. There was also the belief that **farm boys** were more likely to be homesick than city dwellers, while others maintained that **New Englanders** were particularly tender-hearted and therefore vulnerable.
- Doctors sometimes attributed homesickness also to **character flaws**. J. Theodore Calhoun, the assistant surgeon of the Union Army, believed nostalgics needed to be rendered “**more manly**,” while Dr. John Taylor of the Third Missouri Cavalry contended that they were **indolent hypochondriacs** who were probably prone to other vices as well. Taylor told nostalgic soldiers that their “disease was a moral turpitude,” and “was looked upon with contempt – that gonorrhoea and syphilis were not more detestable.”

# Risk factors?

- Some 19-century US doctors believed that **a strong libido and the tendency to masturbate** predisposed soldiers to homesickness, pointing the finger at “those given to solitary vice or the victims of spermatorrhea.” Supposedly, soldiers **who lived in a dream world and who fantasized about home or sex, or both**, became disconnected from their actual surroundings, and wished for different circumstances. **Other vices associated with nostalgia were drinking, gambling and tobacco use.**

# What to do about it?



- While many homesick soldiers were hospitalised in the short term, only in the most severe cases might a **full discharge from the army** be considered. Occasionally, doctors assured patients that they would be returned home on a furlough if symptoms persisted.
- For example, the South Carolina physician and medical essayist Francis P. Porcher noted “**the promise of a furlough ... would literally rescue a sick or wounded soldier from the jaws of death**”.
- A Civil War veteran, writing in 1907, recalled the granting of furloughs as a **perfect antidote** to offset “the gloom of homesickness”.

# Prevention of homesickness in the US army during WW II

## Homesickness and Nostalgia in U.S. History

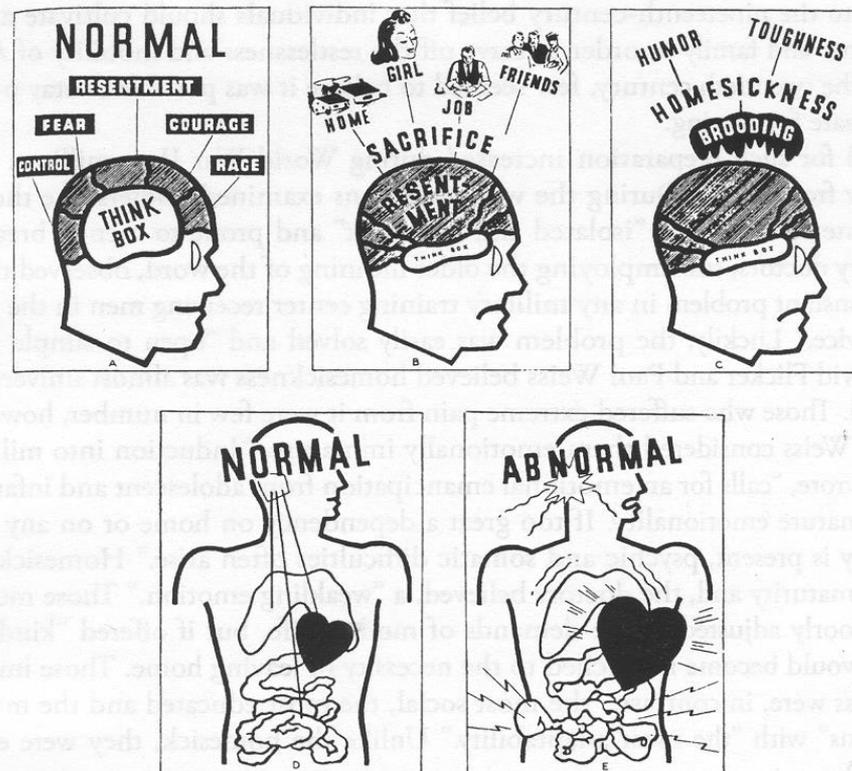


Chart 1.

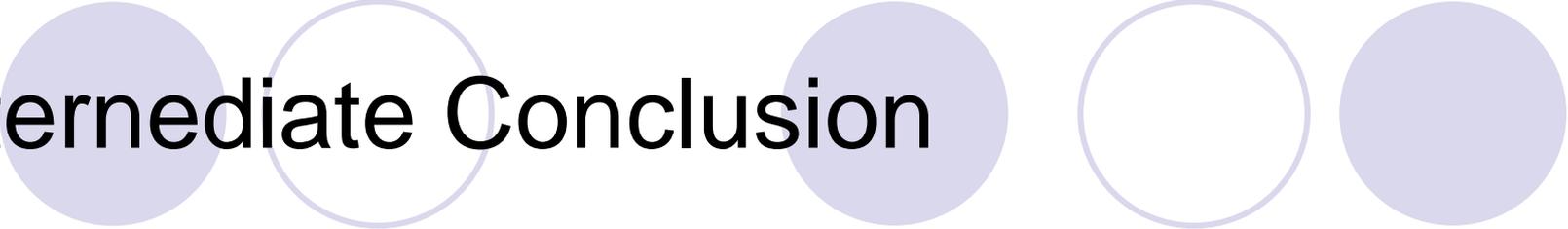
During World War II the U.S. Army attempted to help soldiers understand and cope with their homesickness. Shown here are illustrations from a talk given in 1944. R. Robert Cohen, "Factors in Adjustment to Army Life: A Plan for Preventative Psychiatry by Mass Psychotherapy," *War Medicine*, 5 (Feb. 1944), 85. Courtesy American Medical Association.

# Homesickness and crime

(Jaspers, 1909)

- For Karl Jaspers, extreme crimes such as murder and arson were a distinctive feature of nostalgia. Remarkably, in his thesis, it concerned mainly especially young (12-16 years) girls who, being away from home for the first time, acted out their homesickness by murdering the babies in their care or by committing arson.

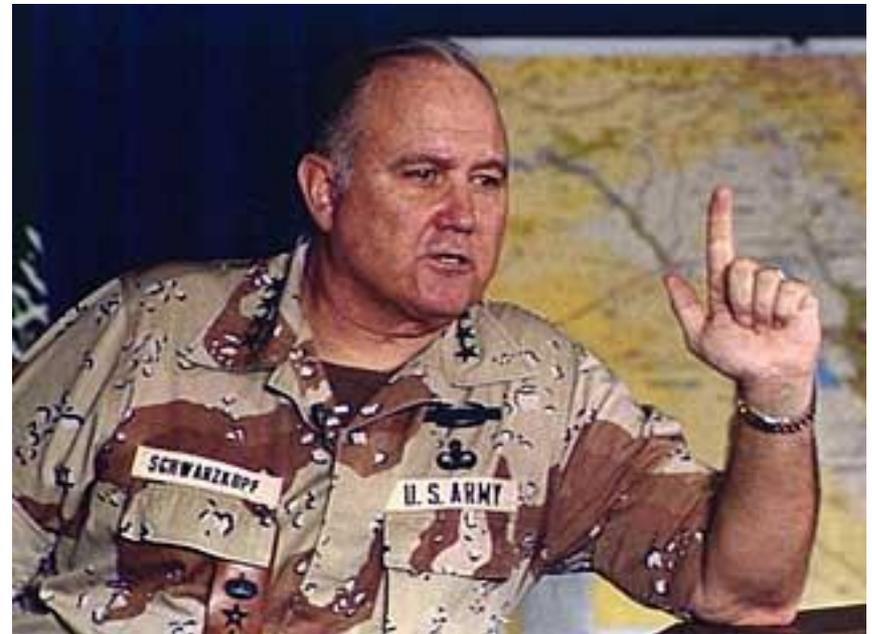
# Intermediate Conclusion

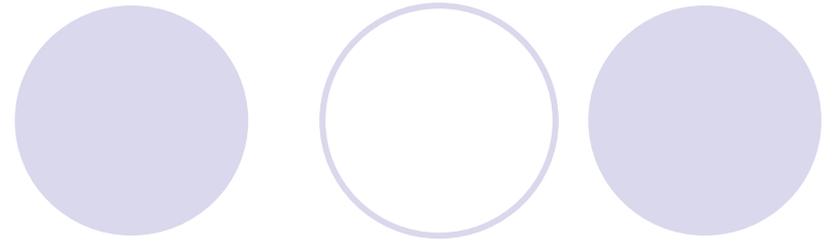
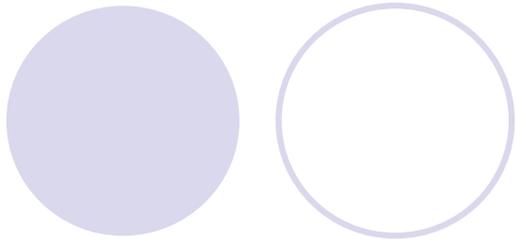


- To **modern Americans** who are accustomed to leaving home such diagnoses and cures seem **strange, even laughable**.
- This strongly contrasts with the widely shared 19-th century conviction that homesickness could kill, which reflects the deep moral and **emotional significance that these Americans attached to home**.
- Today, **Americans celebrate restless mobility and see it as a central part of their national identity**, earlier generations, in contrast, did not, and instead found mobility to be profoundly painful and unnatural.

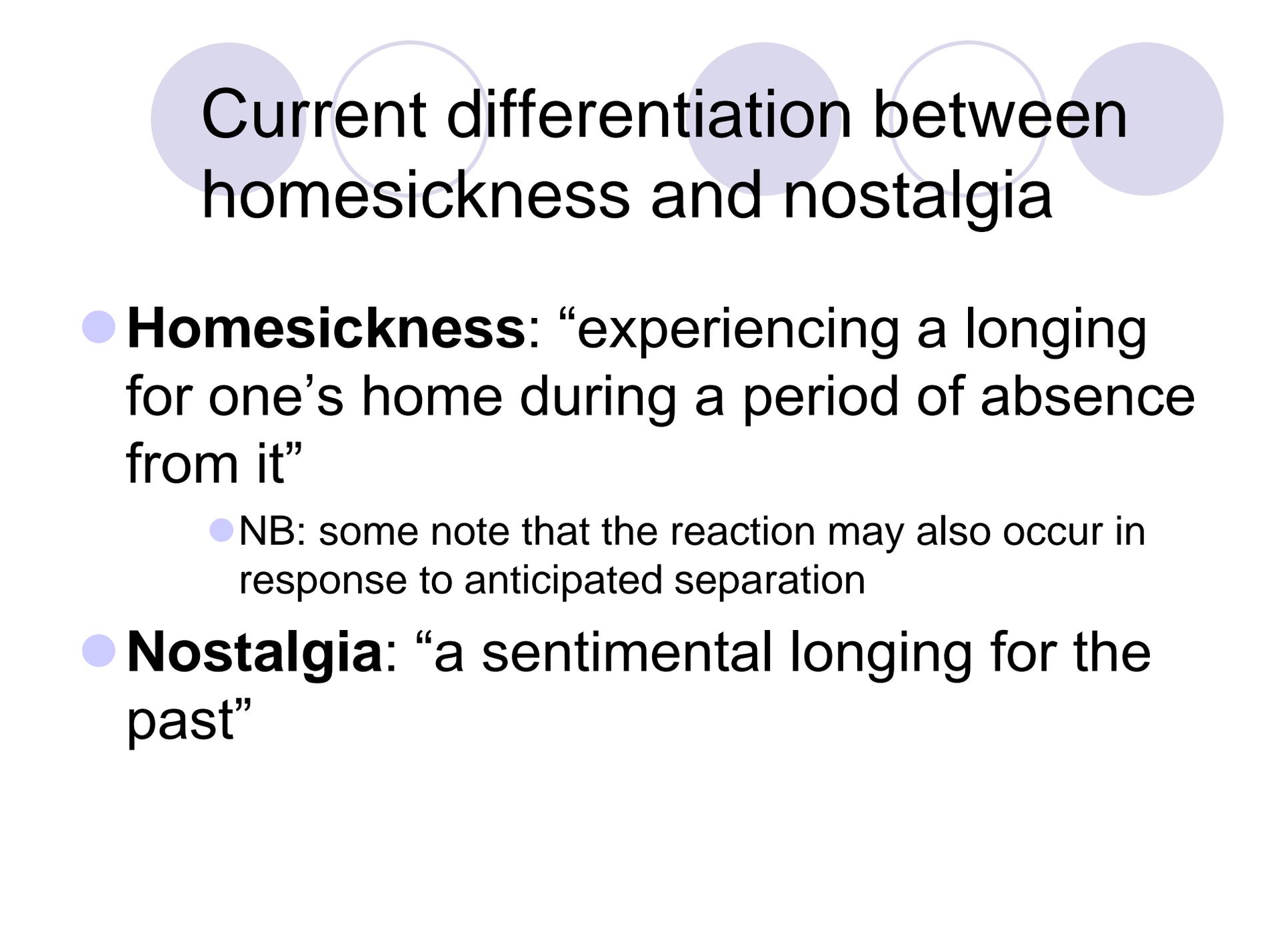
# A case study: the national hero and homesickness

- The myth that “soldiers don't cry” was shattered with Barbara Walters' American television interview of General Norman Schwarzkopf, in his command tent during Operation Desert Storm. The general admitted publicly that **he cried with homesickness**, and showed the teddy bear from his family that he kept on his cot for comfort.



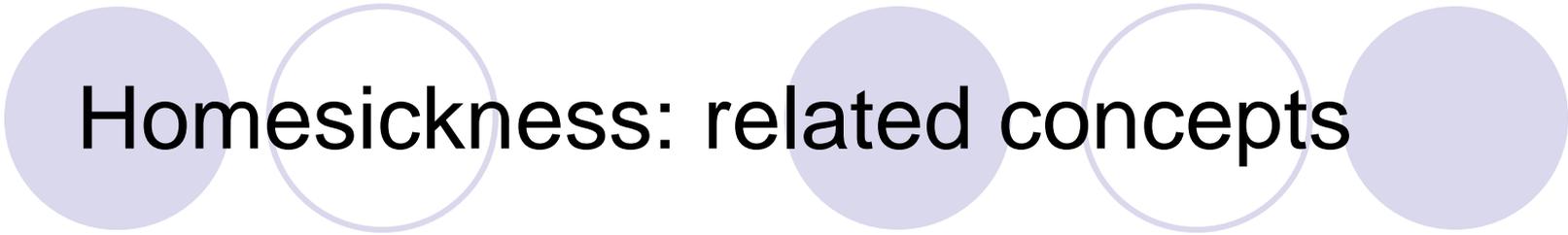


● The present.....



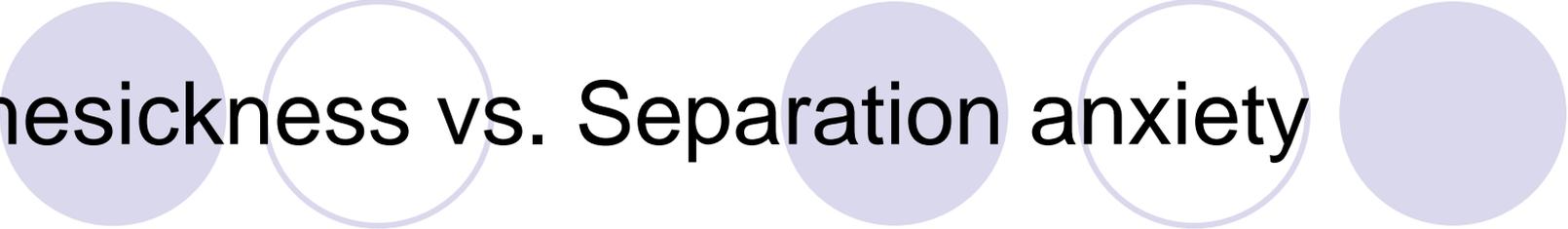
# Current differentiation between homesickness and nostalgia

- **Homesickness:** “experiencing a longing for one’s home during a period of absence from it”
  - NB: some note that the reaction may also occur in response to anticipated separation
- **Nostalgia:** “a sentimental longing for the past”



# Homesickness: related concepts

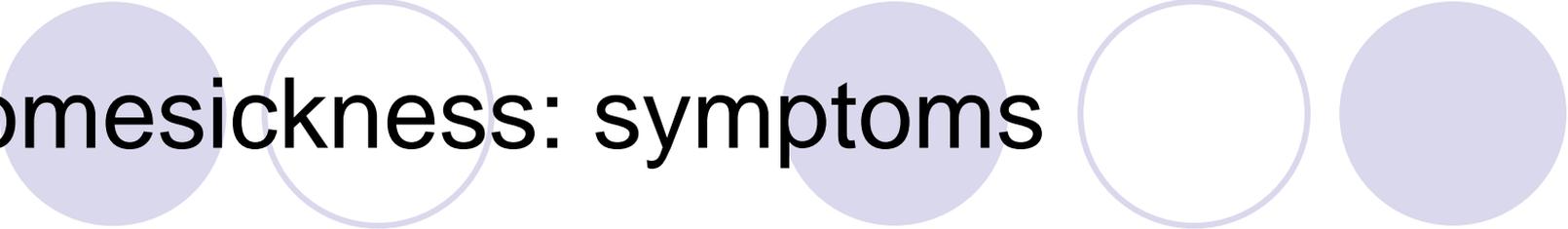
- Separation anxiety (!!)
- Adjustment disorder
- Agoraphobia
- Place attachment
- Depletion anxiety
- Claustrophobia
- Topophilia
- School-phobia
- Etc.



# Homesickness vs. Separation anxiety

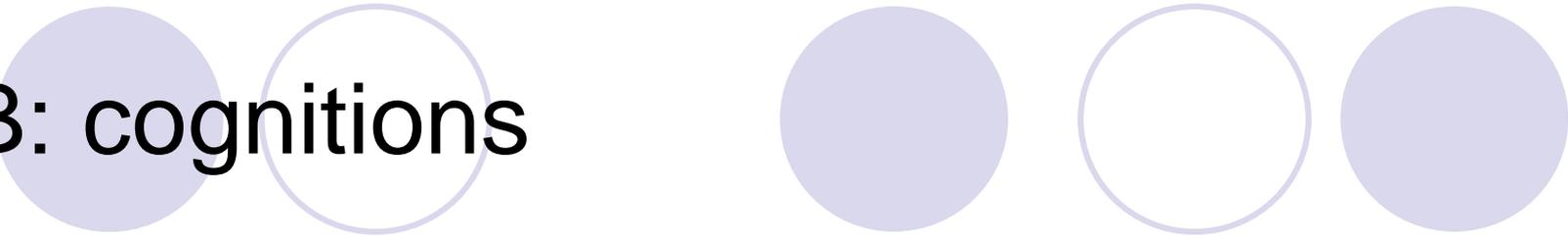
Lay people and health professionals often fail to make a difference between separation anxiety and homesickness. Separation anxiety probably is more prevalent, especially in children. The essential distinction is whether the state of distress also occurs, away from home, but with the parent/caregiver present.

# Homesickness: symptoms

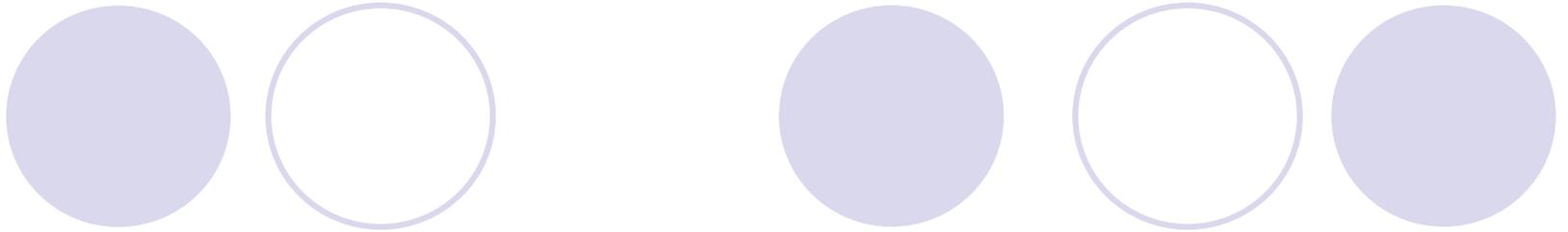


- **Emotional** level: depression, apathy, lack of interest and joy
- **Cognitive** level: obsessive thoughts, rumination, idealization of the home situation, inability to concentrate
- **Somatic** level: loss of appetite, sleep problems, fever
- **Behavioral** level: passivity, withdrawal, crying, acting-out, aggression, swearing, nightmares
  
- Social consequences: serious interference with work and educational activities -> negative effects for one's career
  
- Very characteristic: the quick and total recovery once the individual is back home

# NB: cognitions



- Non-homesick persons think about practical issues, whether everything will run smoothly at home
- Homesick individuals will mainly fantasize about being back home, their ideal situation



# Reasons for ending military training

(Flach et al., 2000)

- 1. military life did not suit me (46%)
- 2. **homesickness (28%)**
- 3. the situation at home (24%)
- 4. disappointing salary (24%)
- 5. did not get the desired function (18%)

# Assessment of homesickness

- A. Do you experience a strong, hardly or not to suppress desire to go back home?
- B1. Do you suffer from an enduring negative mood (sadness, somber, depressed, hopeless, "the blues", irritation or strong concerns)?
- B2. Don't you have any interest in and don't you enjoy the your normal acitivities or leisure time?
- **Do you suffer from:**
  - C1. poor appetite and/or remarkable weigth loss
  - .
  - C2. sleeping problems
  - .
  - C3. loss of vitality
  - .
  - C4. a restless feeling, or the opposiite, a state of apathy and loomliness
  - C5. fatigue
  - .
  - C6. feeling like you cannot think well or loss of ability to concentrate
  - C7. crying more often than normal
  - .

# The prevalence of homesickness

- Difficult to provide reliable estimates, because
  - It depends on the definition of homesickness
  - It depends on how it is assessed
  - Individuals anticipating homesickness may avoid situations that cause homesickness
    - Estimates in children: 20% moderately – severe; 6 – 9% very intense, with depression and/or anxiety
  - There is some evidence that women suffer more from homesickness than men, but it also may be that they are less reluctant than males to admit that they suffer from this condition
  - In the army, it was the chief reason why conscripts sought psychological help
  - It has been suggested that homesickness strikes twice in emigrants: immediately after having left home and when the individual becomes around 60 and youth memories become more easily available

The text is centered on a white background. It is surrounded by six light purple circles. Three circles are arranged in a horizontal row above the text, and three are arranged in a horizontal row below it. The top-left and bottom-right circles are hollow with a thin purple outline, while the other four circles are solid light purple.

**Different ways to look at  
homesickness**



# Different types of homesickness?

- Missing the ***social*** environment (family, friends, neighbours) (the “dog-type”)
- Missing the ***physical*** home-environment (the “cat-type”)
- Thurber (2007) suggests that homesickness in hospitalized children differs in certain important ways from the homesickness in less stressful environments.

Note the correspondence with  
(impossible) love!



- Strong affective reactions to being separated
- Absolute impossibility of exchange
- Remarkable correspondence in emotional, cognitive (idealizing!!), and somatic reactions

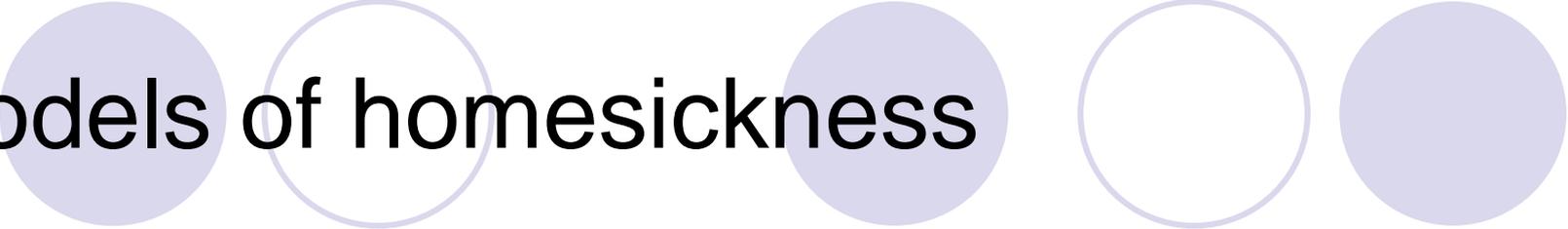
According to the American  
Psychiatric Association (DSM- IV)  
(severe) homesickness may be  
best classified as adjustment  
disorder with mixed anxiety and  
depressed mood (diagnostic code  
309.28)

But homesickness as such is not  
recognized – and thus also hardly  
if ever diagnosed as a mental  
disorder!!!



# Homesickness and adjustment?

- Homesickness is a synonym for poor adjustment
- Homesickness prevents adequate adjustment to new situations
- Failure to adjust to new situations induces a state of homesickness



# Models of homesickness

- Homesickness may be associated with losses: the loss of the familiar (social) environment – grief model
- Homesickness may be related to the unpredictability and the uncertainty of a new situation
- Homesickness may be connected with loss of control in the new situation
- Homesickness may be linked with learning new routines, the process of adapting to a new situation



# Homesickness and stress

- A residential move is included in the list of stressful life events (Holmes & Rahe)
- Associations have been reported with the onset of medical conditions, including diabetes, leukemia, and depression
- In hospitalized people, homesickness may seriously interfere with the recovery process



# A dual process-model of homesickness

- Making a distinction between:
  - (1) the separation from the home environment
    - &
  - (2) the integration into the new environment
- “Real” homesickness is primarily about (1), with problems with (2) as the consequence

# Dual process model of coping with homesickness

Stroebe et al. 2015

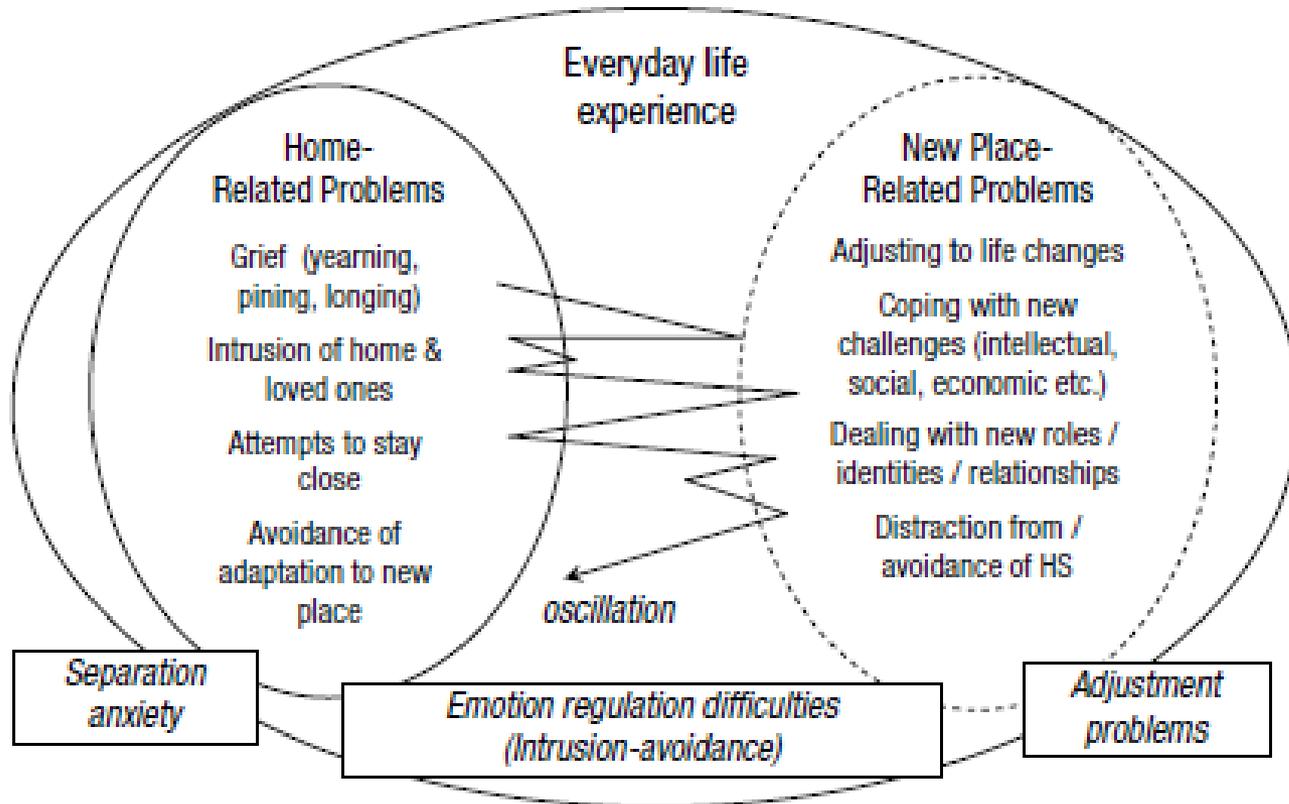
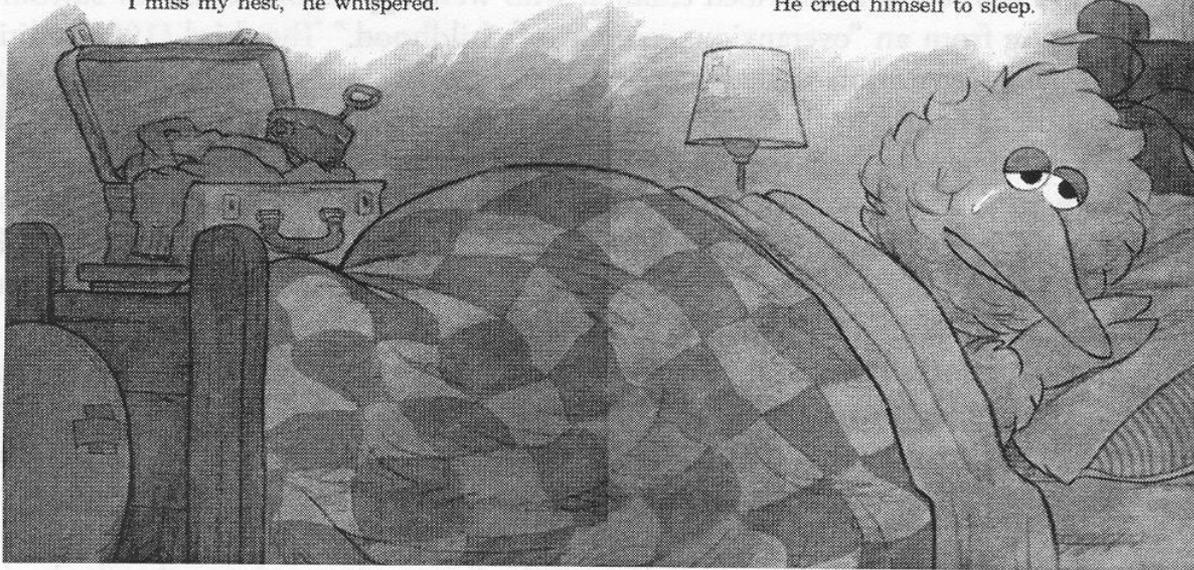


Fig. 1. A dual process model of coping with homesickness (HS).

# Homesickness in animals?

But Big Bird did not sleep tight.  
He thought about Sesame Street.  
And the more he thought,  
the sadder he felt.  
“I miss my nest,” he whispered.

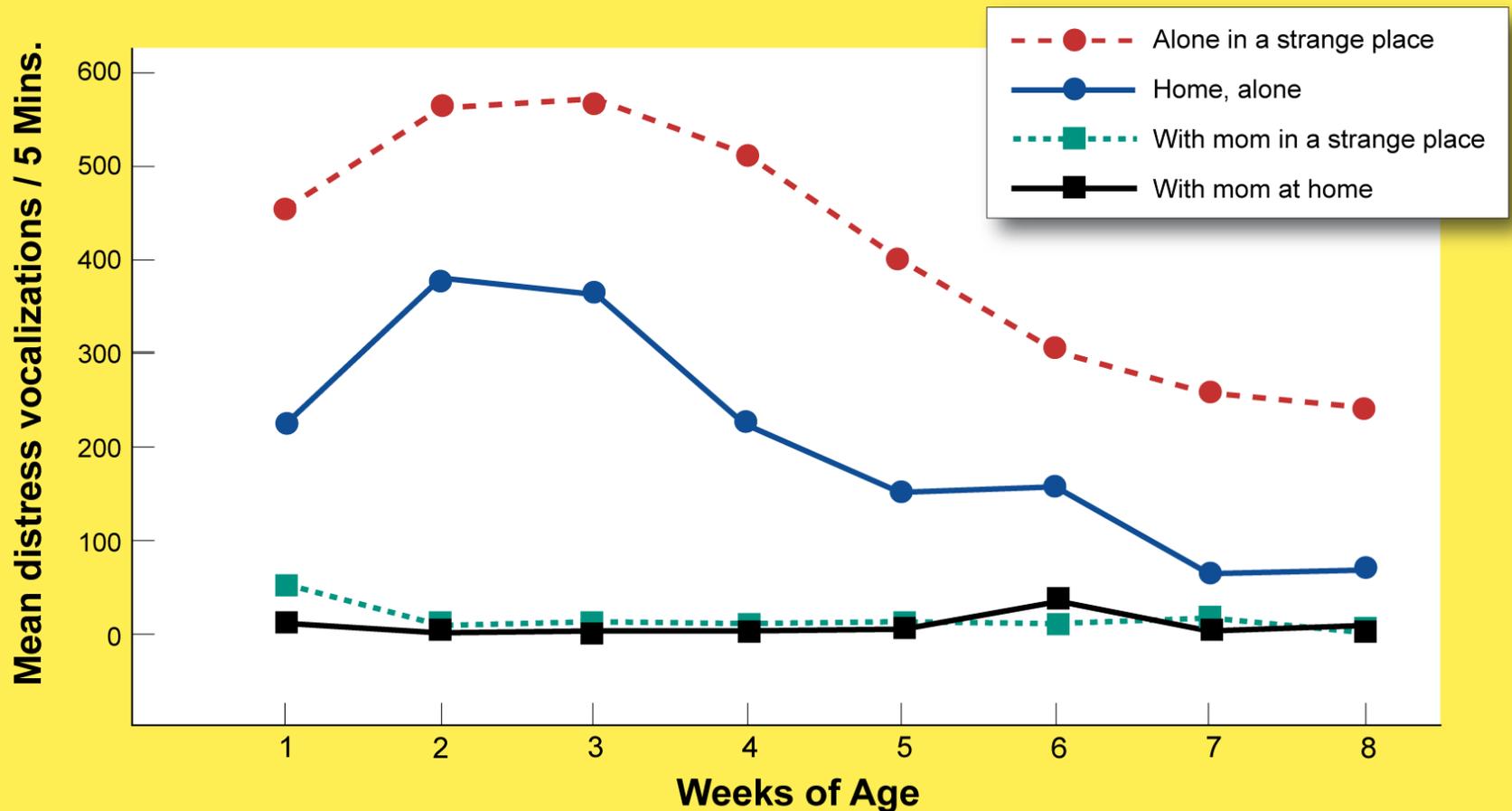
A tear rolled down his cheek.  
“I miss my friends,”  
he cried softly.  
“I want to go HOME!”  
He cried himself to sleep.



The children's book *I Want to Go Home* used Big Bird, a popular character from the *Sesame Street* tv show, to teach youngsters that they could deal with separation and overcome homesickness. Sarah Roberts, *I Want to Go Home* (New York, 1985), 9–10. Illustrations by Joe Mathieu. “Sesame Workshop”®, “Sesame Street”®, and associated characters, trademarks, and design elements are owned and licensed by Sesame Workshop. © 1985 Sesame Workshop. All Rights Reserved. Published by Random House Children's Books, a division of Random House, Inc. New York, in conjunction with Sesame Workshop. Permission of Sesame Workshop.

# Homesickness in animals?

## Guinea Pig DVs as a Function of Age and Testing Condition

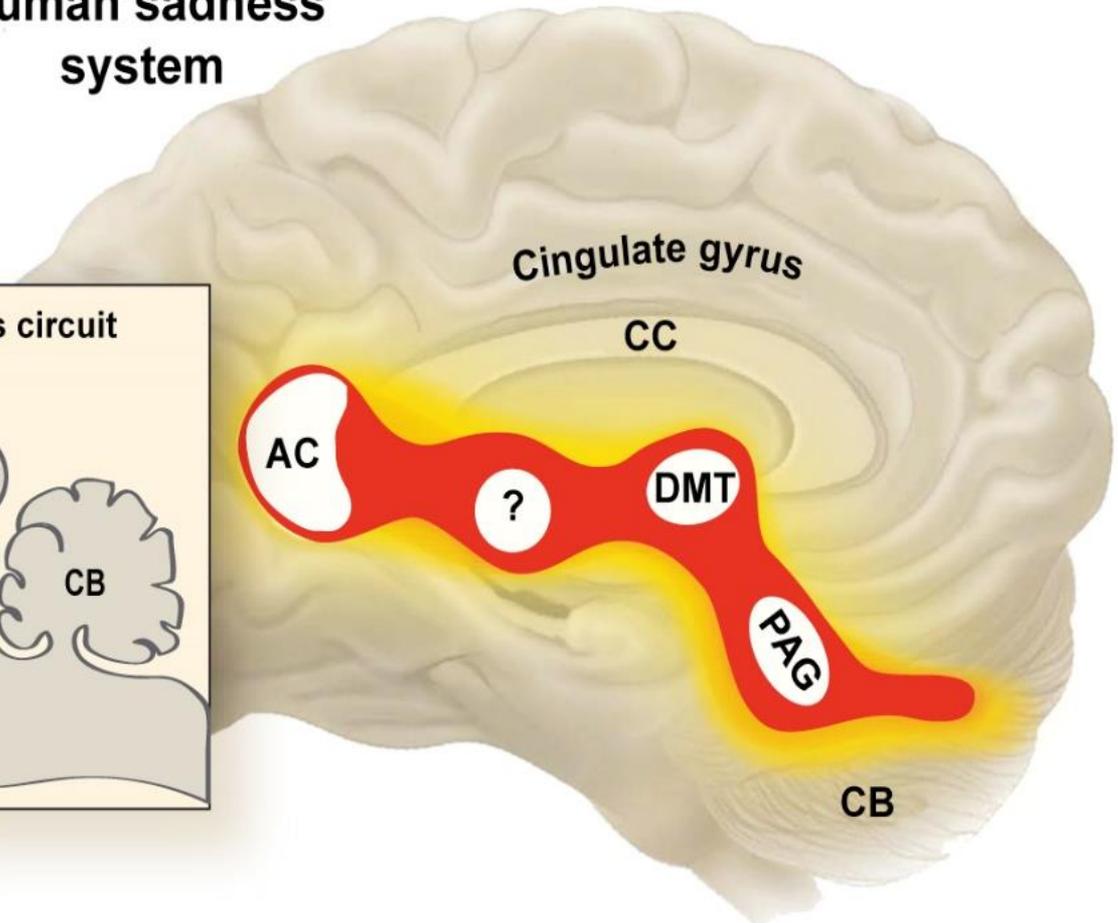
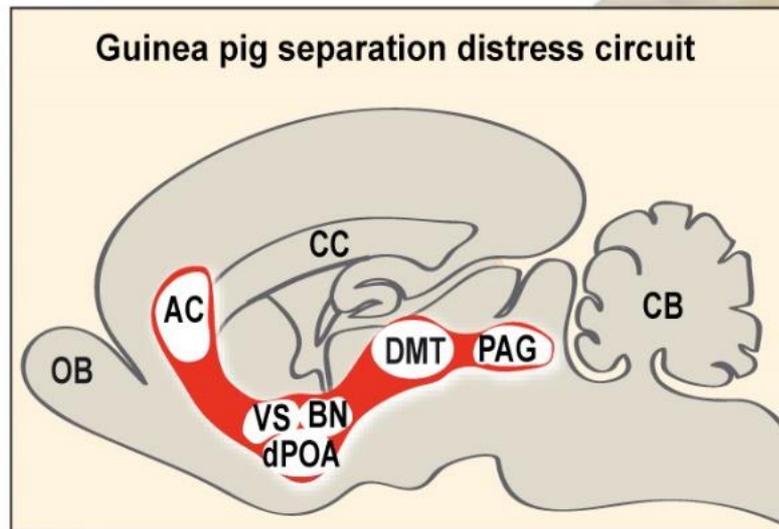


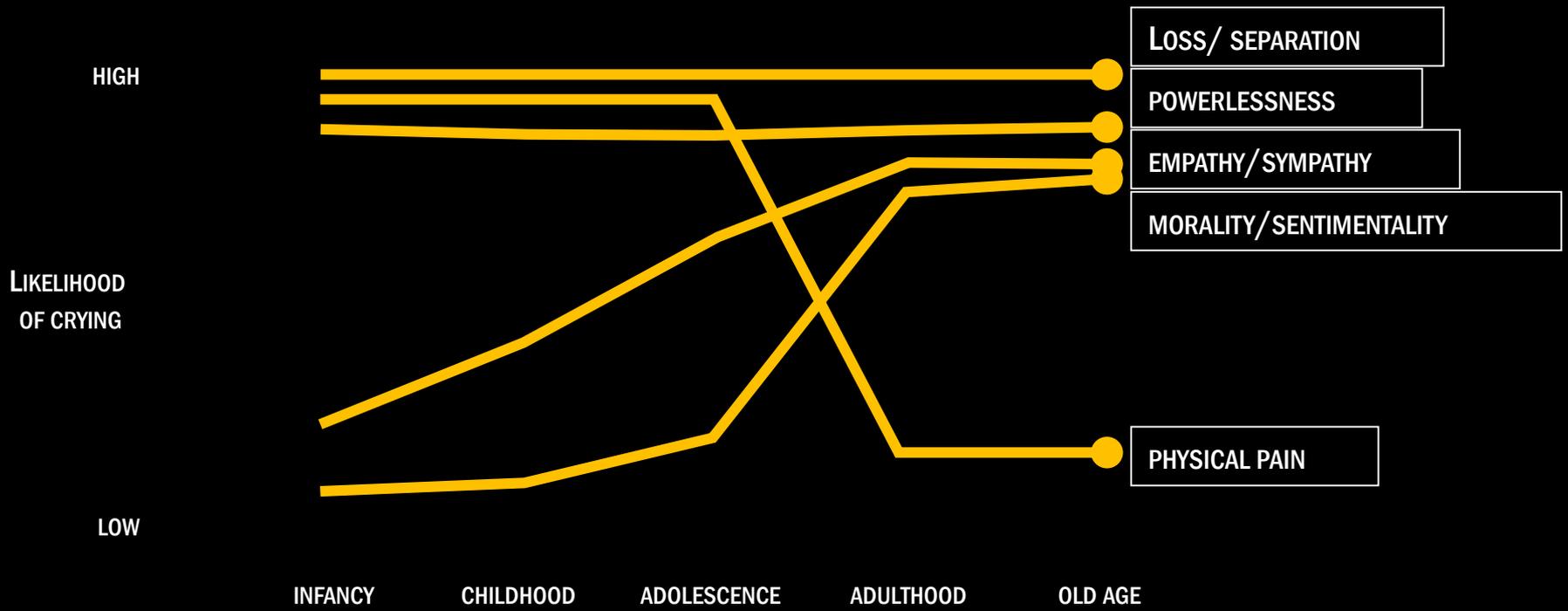
(Adapted from Pettiohn, 1979)

# Brain and homesickness: emotional pain

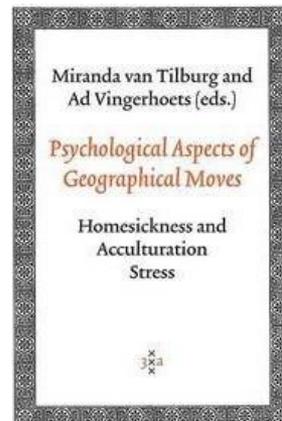
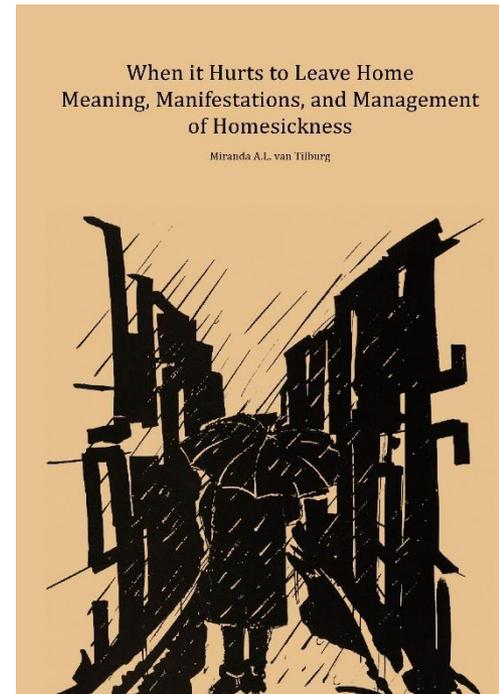
(Panksepp)

## Human sadness system

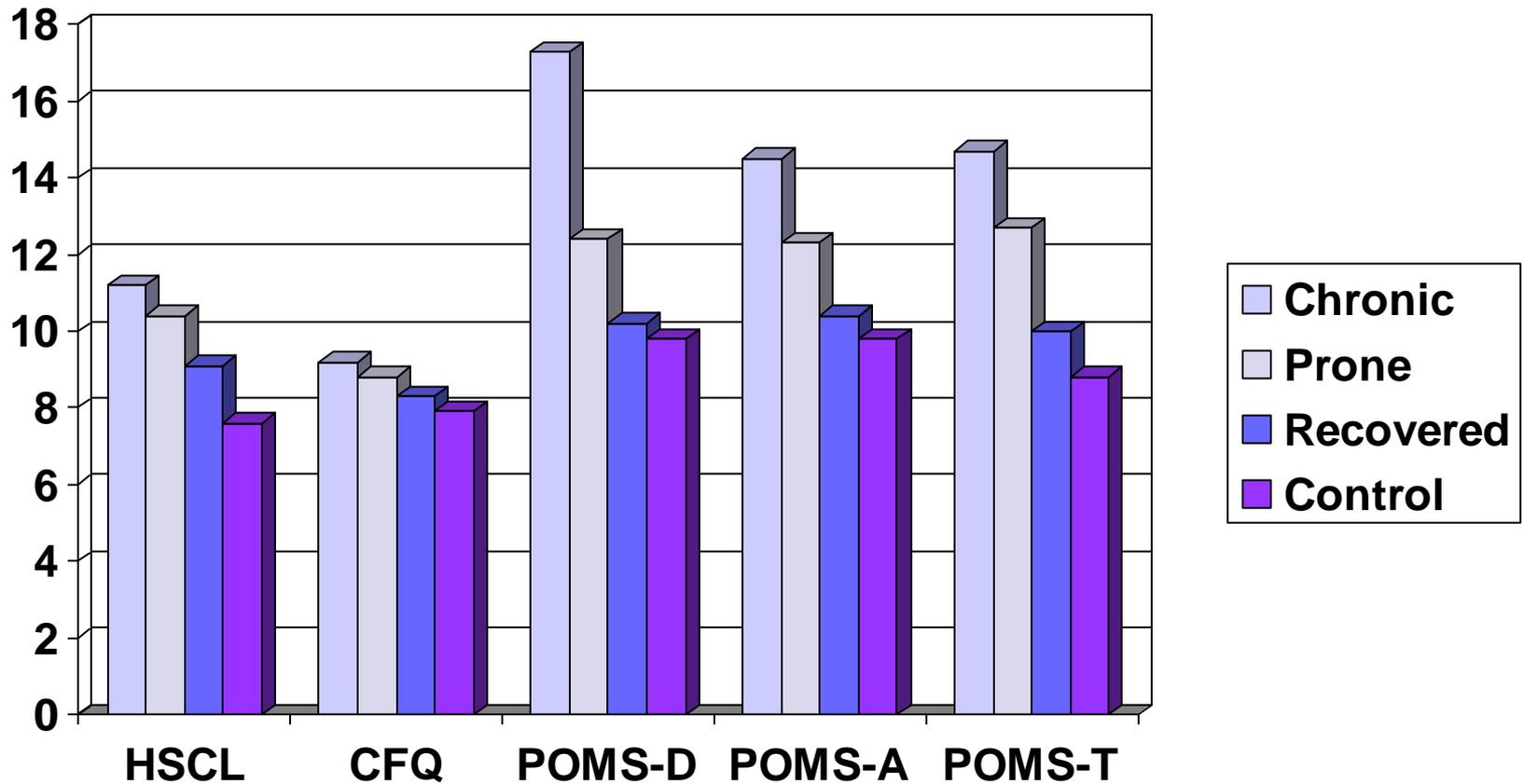




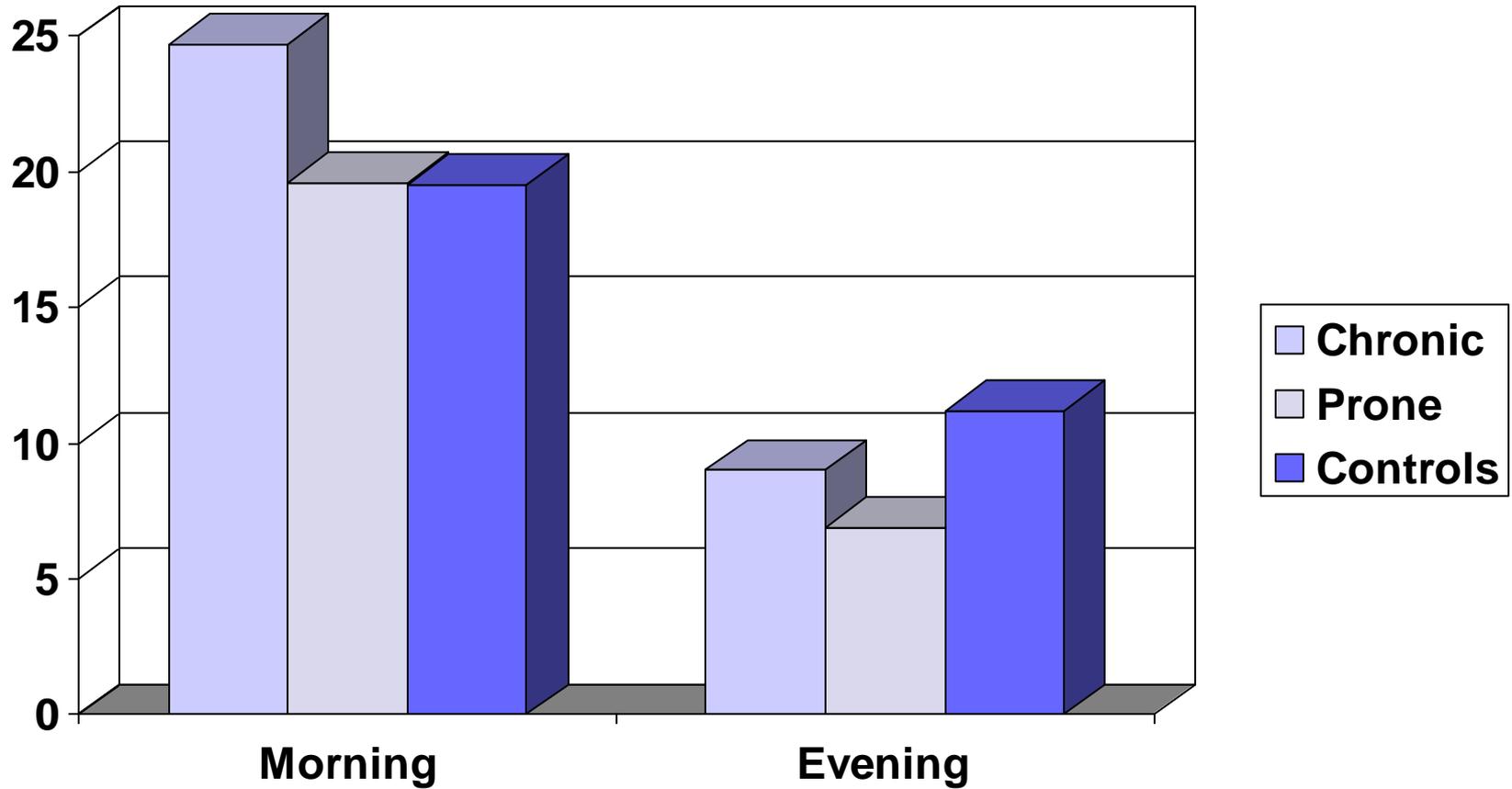
# Research by our group.....



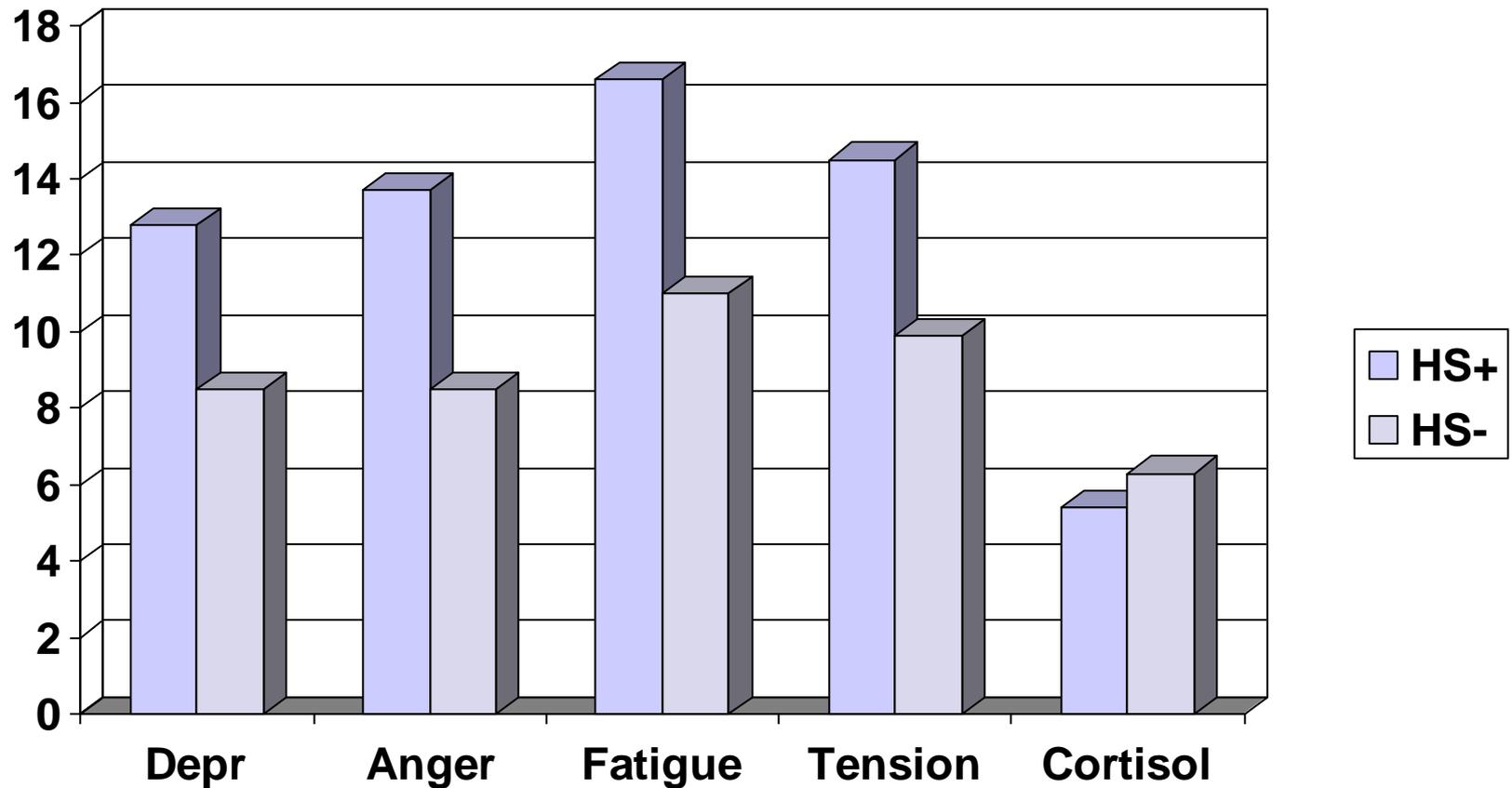
# Homesickness and well-being - 1



# Homesickness and cortisol



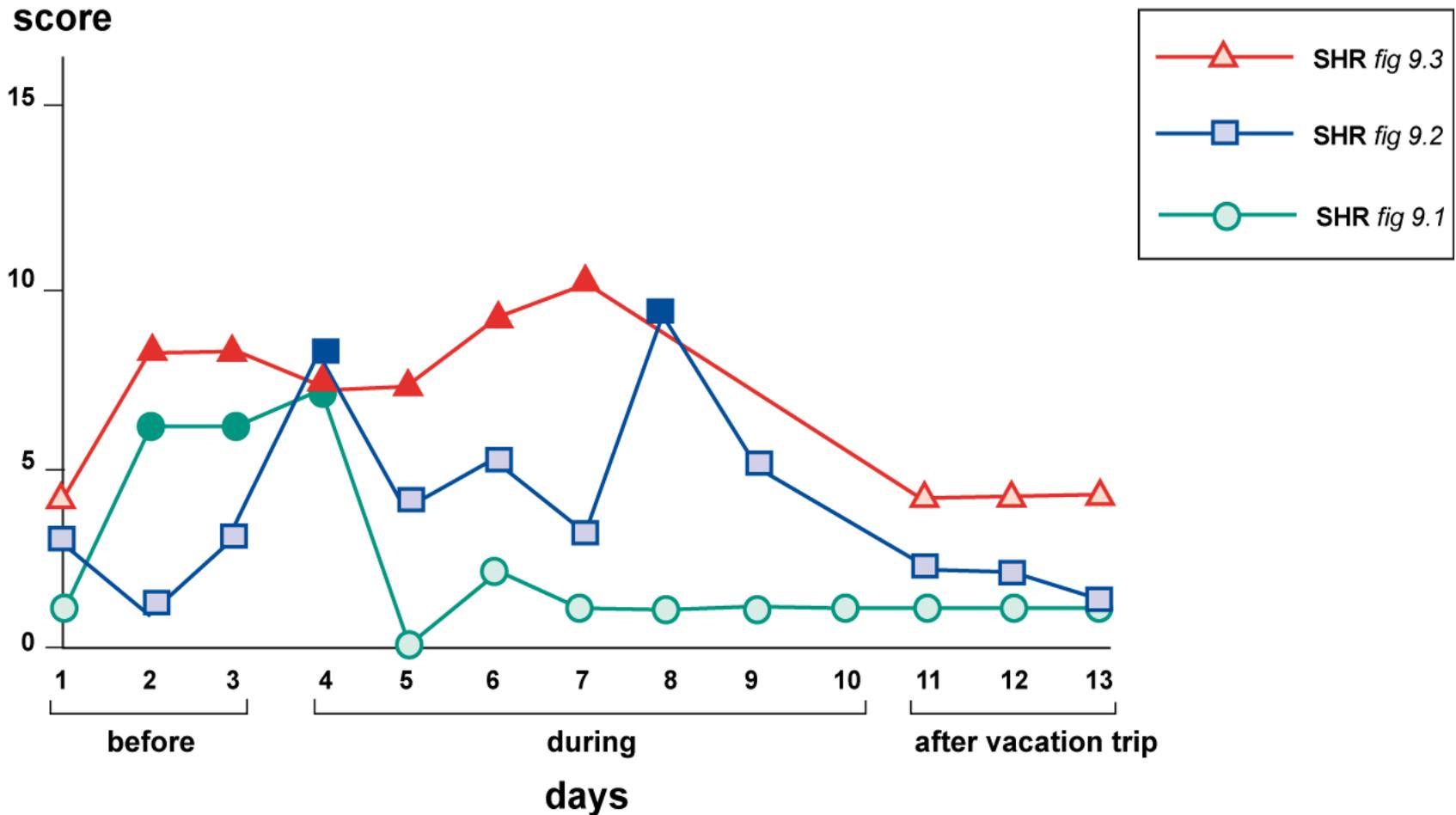
# Homesickness and well-being (during a holiday trip)

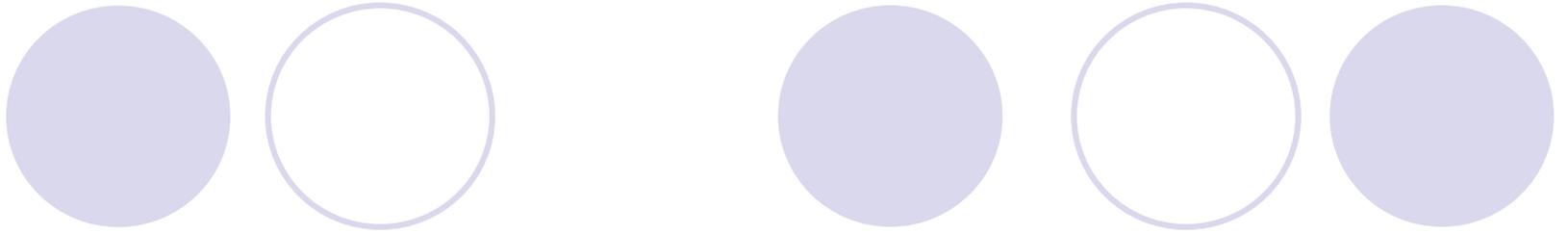


# The dynamics of homesickness

- The degree of homesickness may fluctuate considerably over days and even within days
  - Quiet moments (during meals, just before sleeping, when awake alone in bed) are high risk moments
- See cases of adults during a vacation trip
- In children:
  - For the least homesick (80% of children), they begin their stay away from home with a low level of homesickness and maintain that level throughout their time away from home
  - For the most homesick (20%) their homesickness starts with a moderate level and increases in intensity until just before the reunion with the caregivers

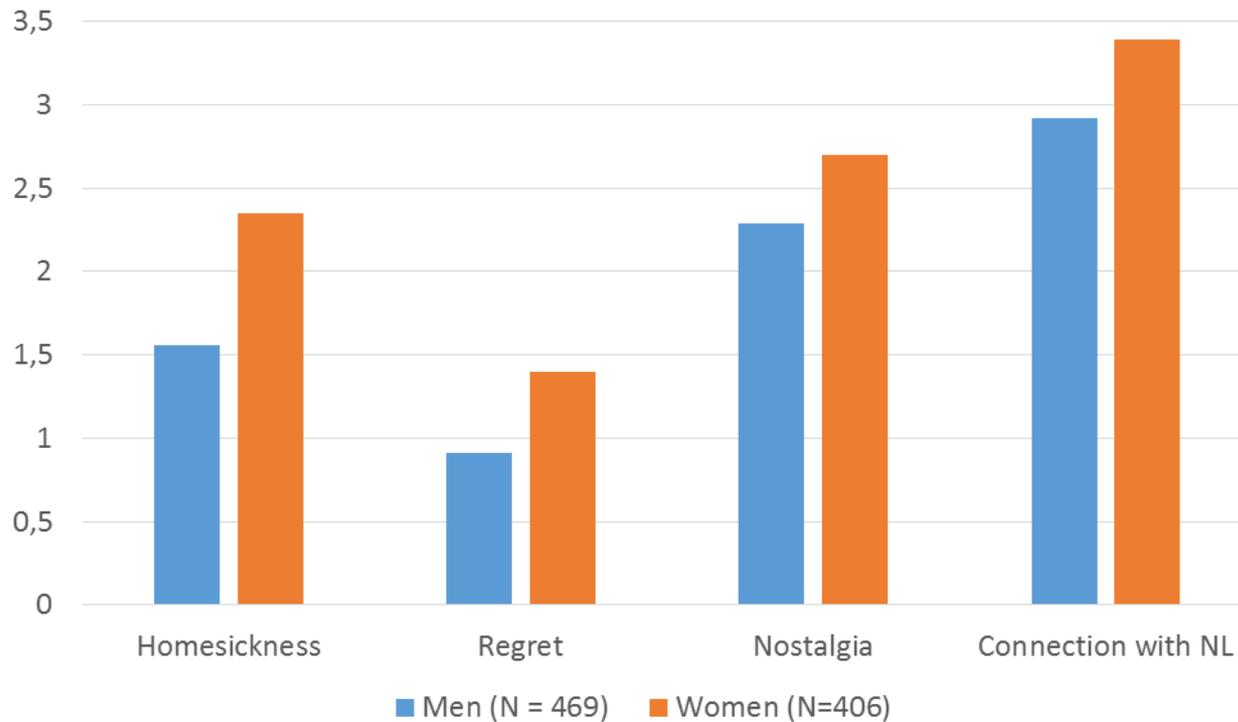
# Anticipatory homesickness?



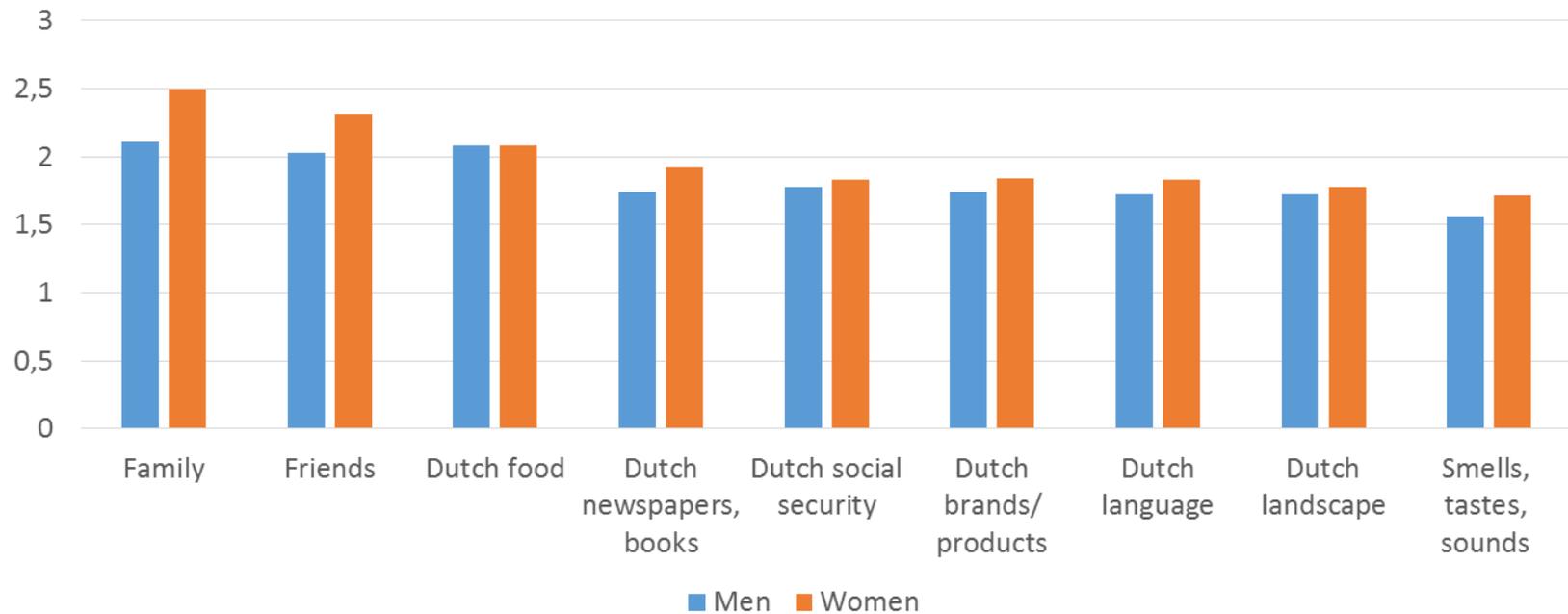


A study among Dutch expats

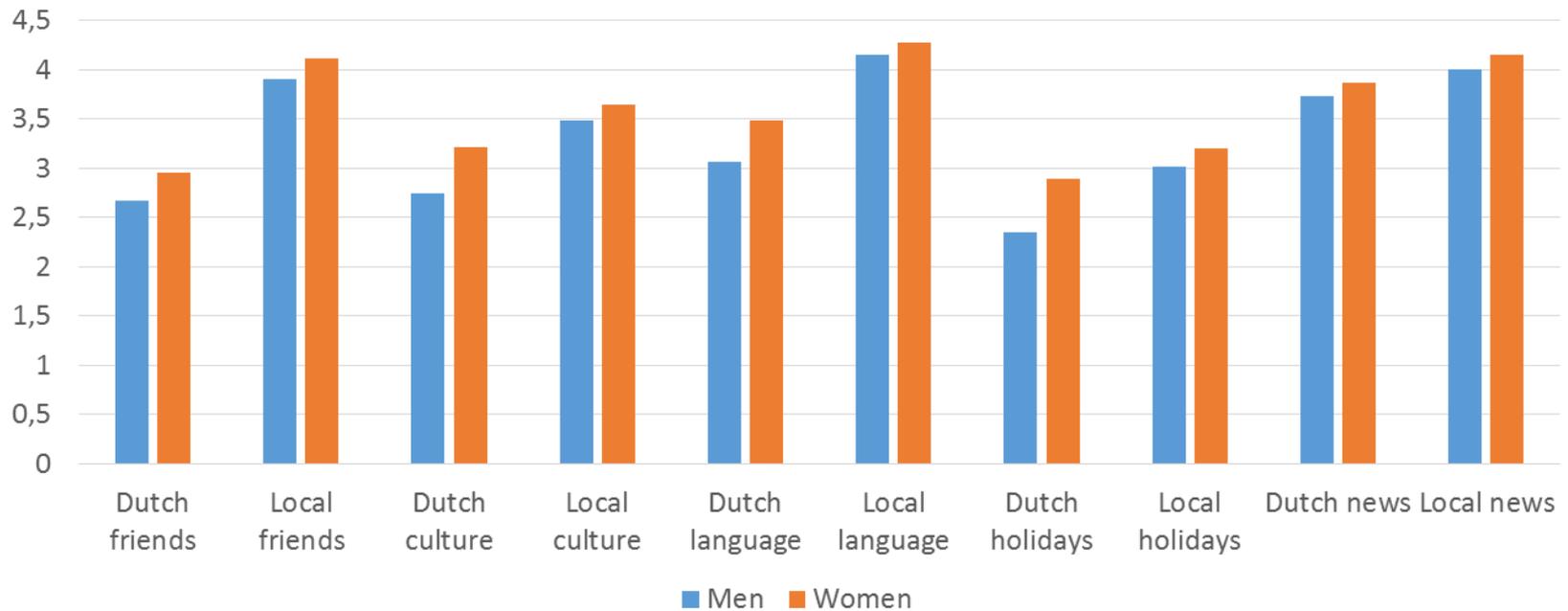
# Study among Dutch expats



# What Dutch expats miss most of all.....



# How much value do Dutch expats attach to.....





# Predisposing factors

- Experience factors
- Attitude factors
- Family factors
- Personality factors

# Predisposing factors – 1: experience

- Little previous experience away from home
- Young age

## ○ Note:

- These two factors are clearly related
- The distinction between homesickness and separation anxiety is not clear
- Previous experience was not a protective factor in hospitalized children

# Predisposing factors – 2: attitude

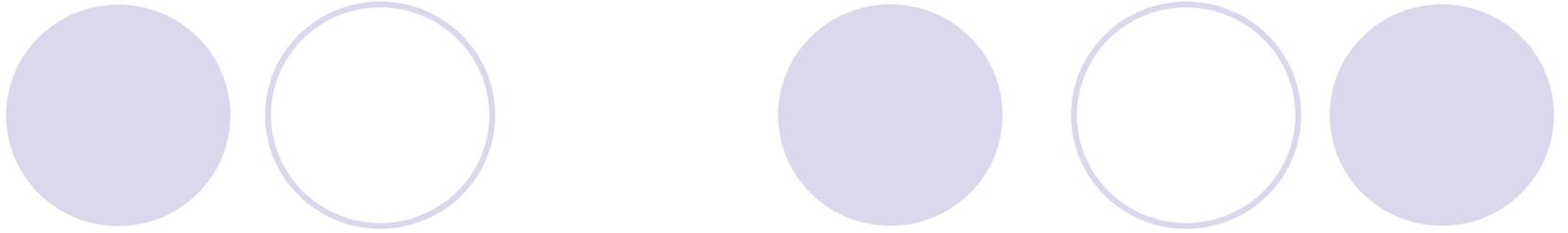
- Belief that homesickness will be intense
- Negative first impressions
- Low expectations for the new environment
- Perceived absence of social support

# Predisposing factors – 3: family

- Low decision control
- Caregivers who express anxiety or ambivalence about the separation
- The experience of an unresolved negative life event (e.g., a divorce or other disruptive event) does not necessarily predispose to homesickness

# Predisposing factors – 4: personality

- Lack of social skills, shyness
- Need to belong
- Neuroticism
- Extraversion (+ -> protective factor!),
- Attachment: insecure attachment
  - anxious-ambivalent (not found in the hospital setting)
- External locus of control
- Pre-existing anxiety or depression
- Rigidity
- State factor: being in love (???)



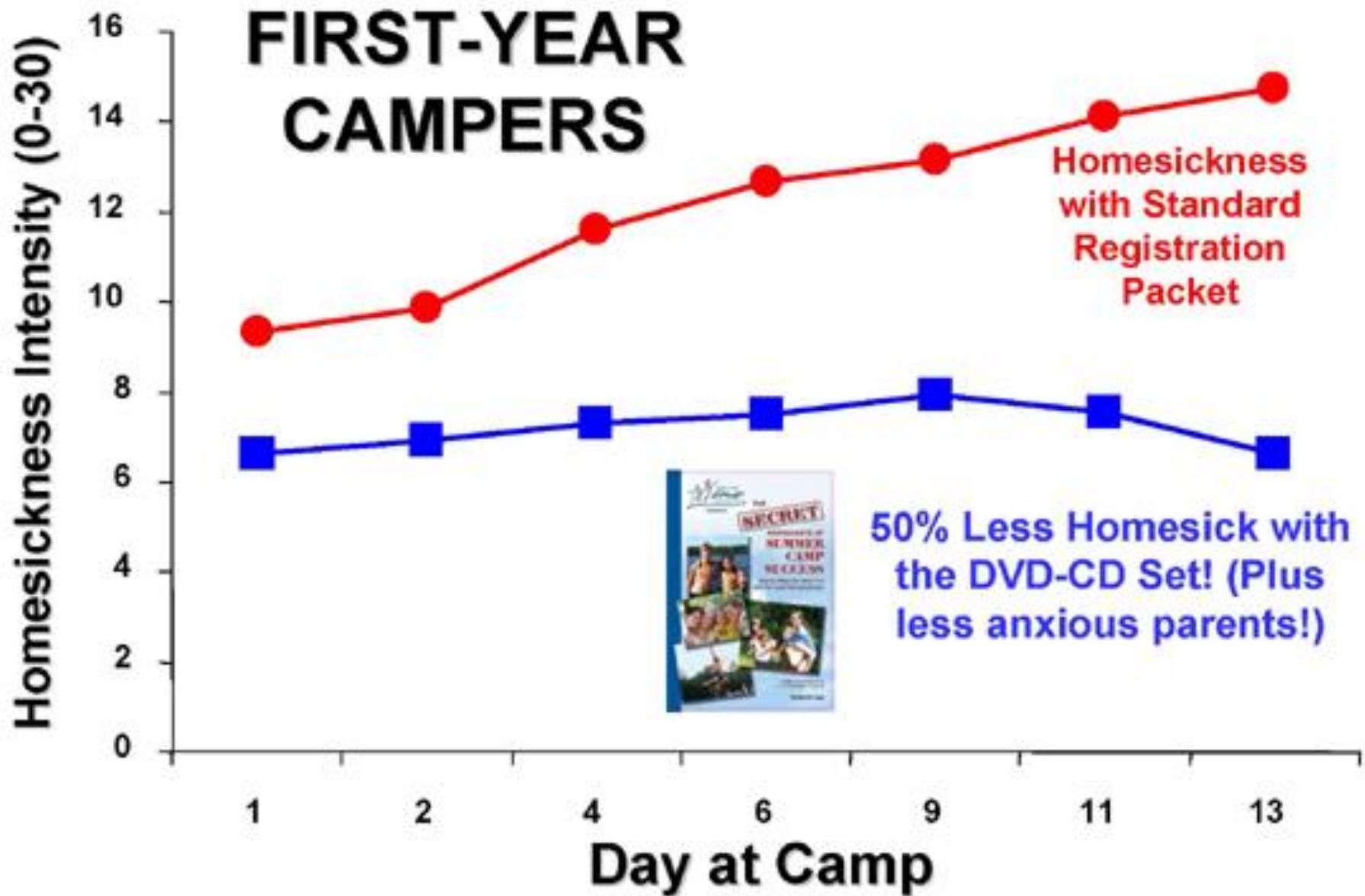
What can we do about it?

# What can we do about it?

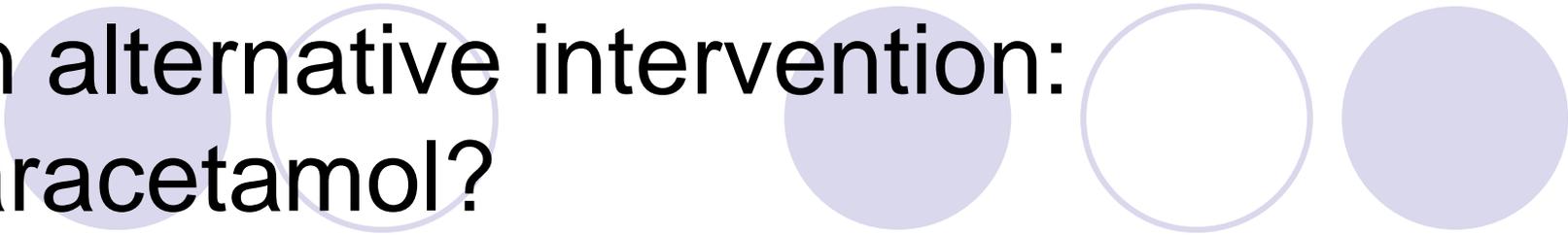
(especially for children)

(NB: none of them with sufficient proof of effectiveness)

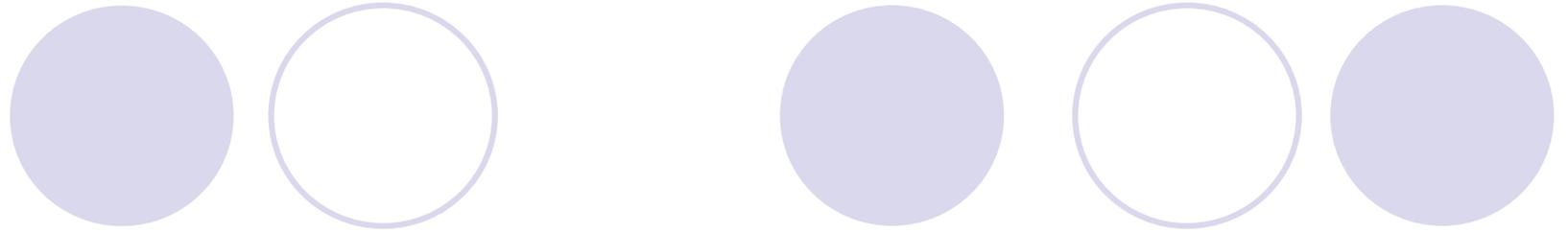
- What does **not** seem to be helpful: writing about it!
- Information about the new environment
- Psycho-education
- Social support
- Explicit coping instructions
- Education to parents/ caregivers
- Training: staying with intimates
- Training and education of supervisors
- Paracetamol (???)
  - Aimed objectives:
    - Less severe homesickness experience
    - Less anxiety and depression
    - Having more fun, increased capacity to enjoy the new experiences



# An alternative intervention: paracetamol?

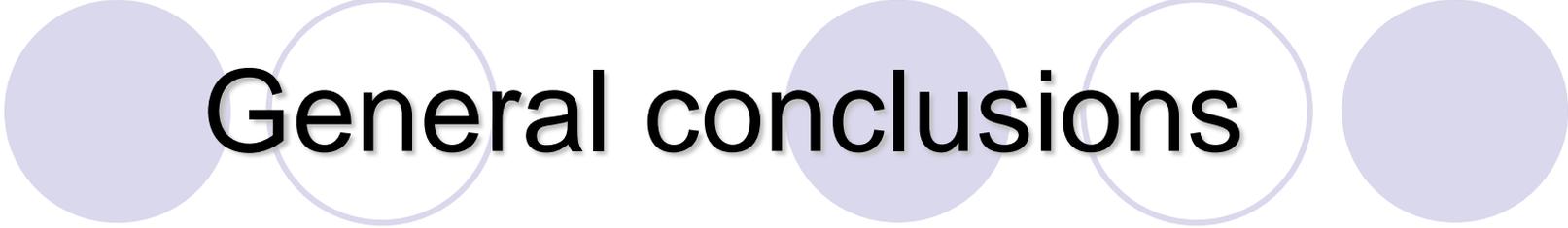


- In May 2011 I was approached by a woman, who asked me if I could help her male friend who suffered from severe homesickness, preventing him from spending more than three days away from home. However, she had a special wish: a three week vacation in Norway.
- Could I help him to be able to stay away for three weeks (and to enjoy it)?
- I told her that I am no clinical psychologist, have no clinical practice, but that I also was not aware of any effective intervention.
- When she further insisted, I suggested that he could try to take every day the maximal dose of paracetamol, starting a few days before departure. I emphasized that I could not promise that it indeed would be helpful.
- The woman sent me two e-mails, one during her vacation and one when back home. She was very pleased to tell me that her friend had also enjoyed the vacation. Occasionally, the homesickness seemed to break through, but taking another paracetamol was in all cases successful to suppress it.



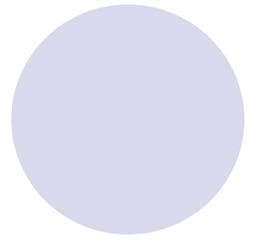
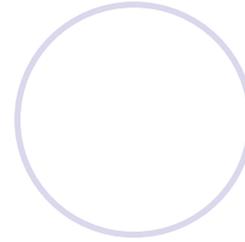
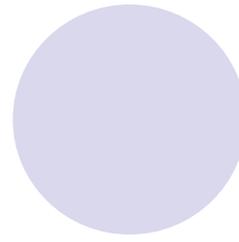
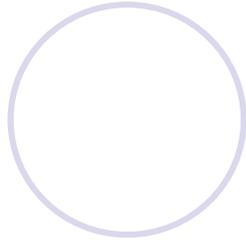
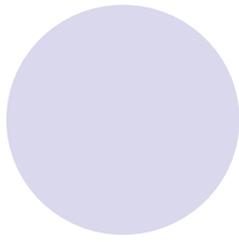
## Suggestions for coping with homesickness on the internet

- <https://www.gooverseas.com/blog/ways-reduce-homesickness-abroad>
- <https://www.travelnursing.org/10-remedies-to-cure-homesickness/>

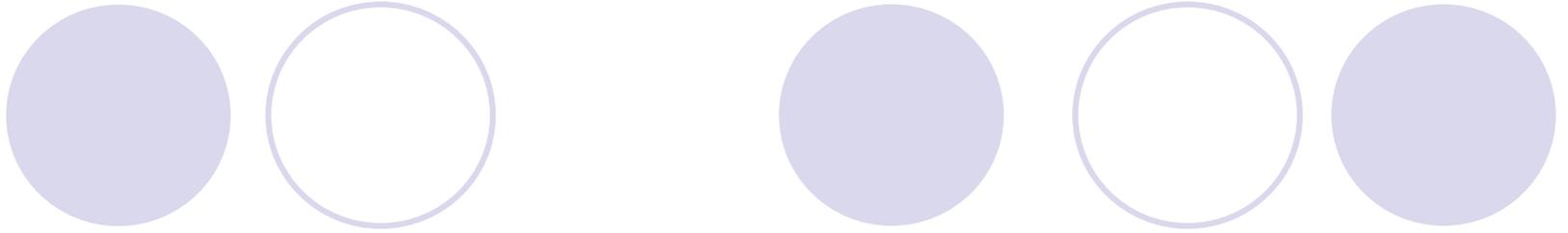


# General conclusions

- Homesickness, a universal human condition, is very similar to an emotional disorder (reactive depression), preventing people from integrating into a new environment.
- It may seriously interfere with daily functioning and may impact on career choices.
- We currently have no proven effective interventions to help people to cope better with this condition.

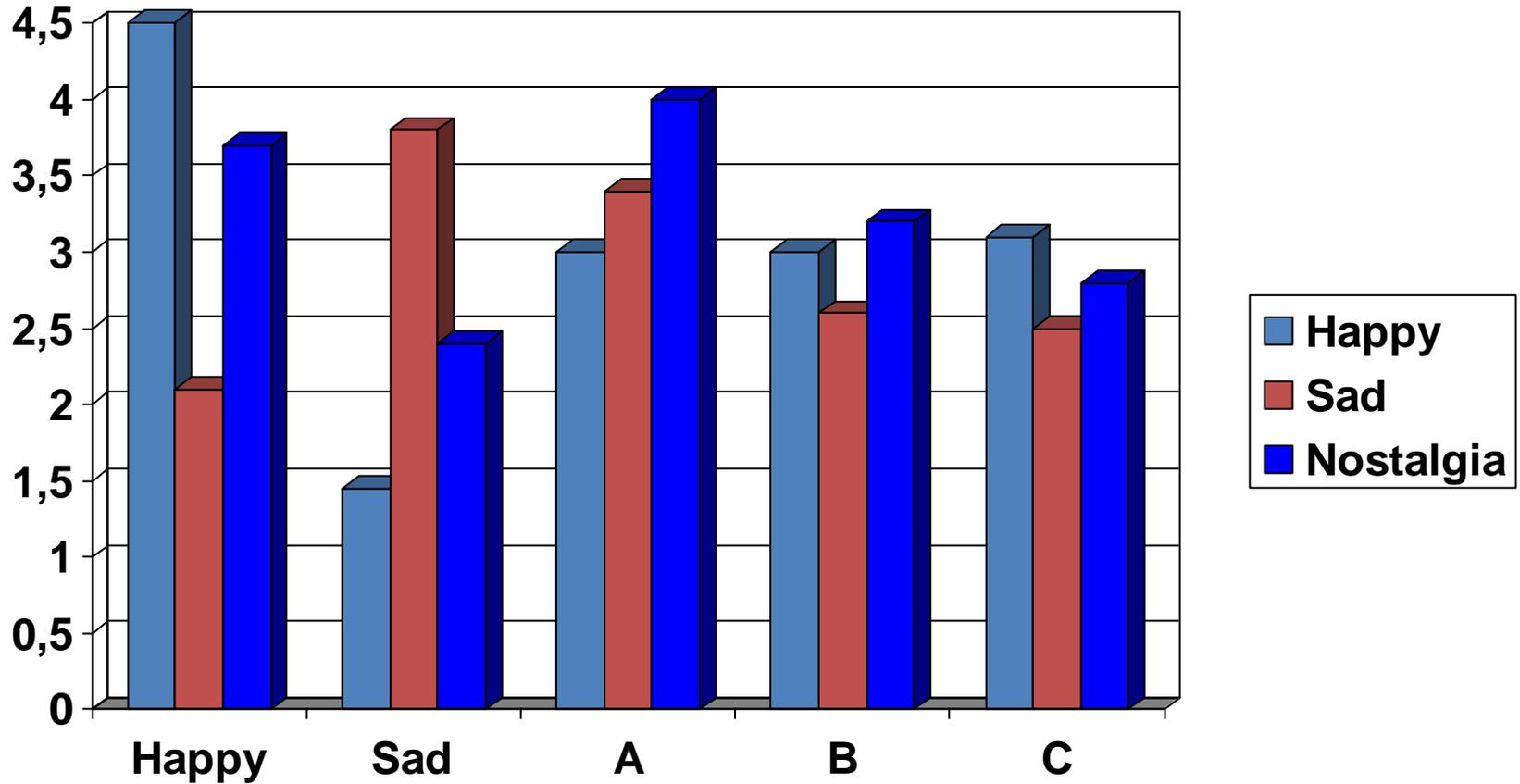


● And what about  
nostalgia.....



- Nostalgia: “a sentimental longing for the past”
- A positive emotion with some remarkable positive effects on the individual who experiences this emotion
- **NB: this is about very specific individual memories, not the well-known general sentiment of the Good Old Days!!**

Effects of Happy, Sad, and Nostalgic music on feelings of (A) connectedness with others; (B) protection and safety; and (C) being loved by others

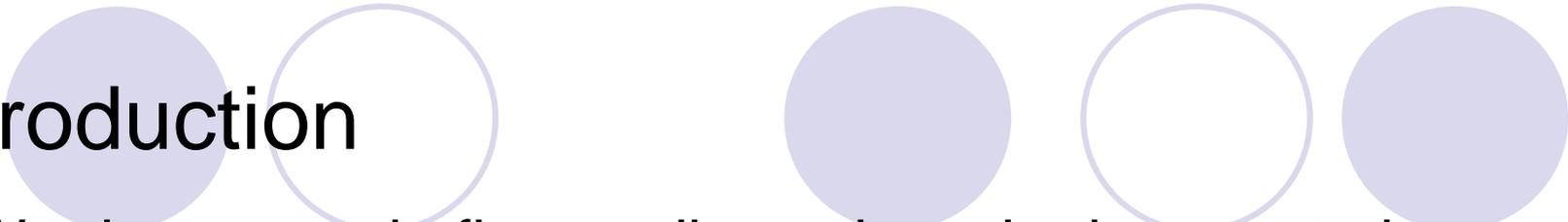




# Heartwarming Memories: Nostalgia Maintains Physiological Comfort

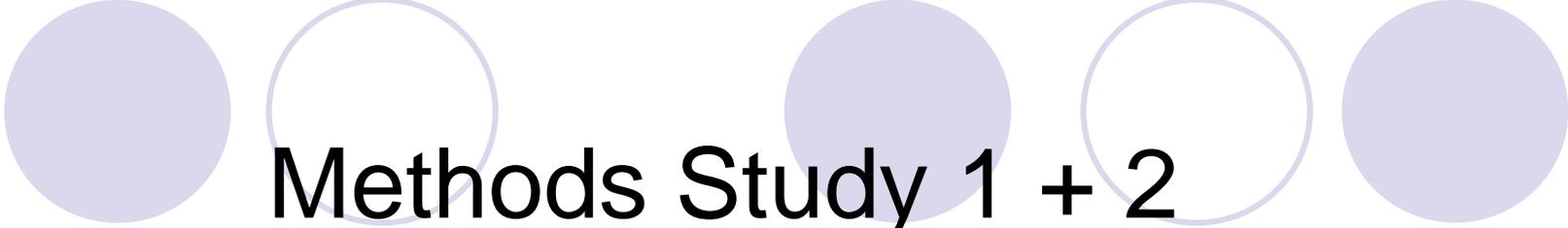
Xinyue Zhou, Tim Wildschut, Constantine Sedikides,  
Ding-Guo Gao and Ad J. J. M. Vingerhoets

(Emotion, 2012)



# Introduction

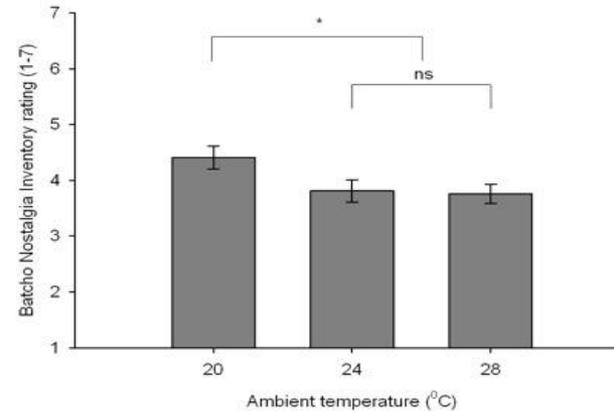
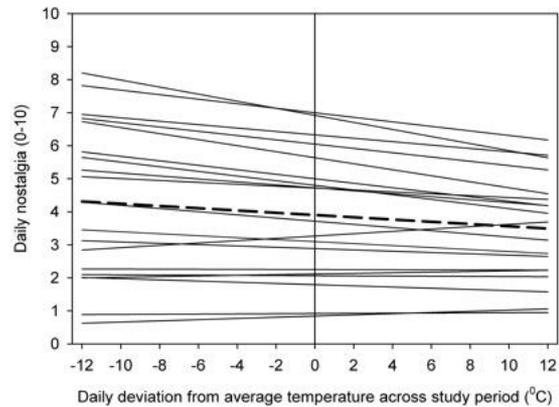
- We document, in five studies, a broader homeostatic function for nostalgia that encompasses the maintenance of both psychological and physiological comfort.
- **Hypotheses:**
- (1) Participants experience more nostalgia on colder (vs. warmer) days
- (2) Participants in a cold room experience more momentary nostalgia than participants in a neutral and warm room
- (3) Higher levels of music-evoked nostalgia predict increased physical warmth
- (4) Nostalgia increase estimates of ambient temperature
- (5) Thinking about a nostalgic (compared to ordinary autobiographical) event increases exposure tolerance in a cold pressor test

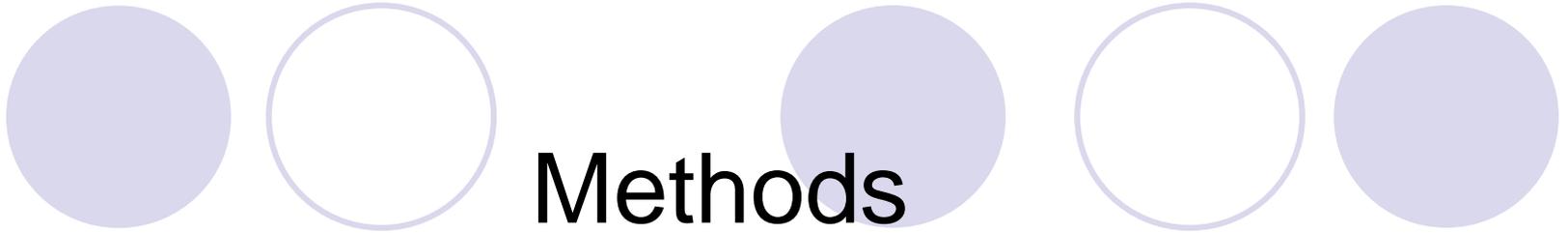


# Methods Study 1 + 2

- **Study 1:** We examined naturalistically whether nostalgia is triggered by physical coldness. Participants (N = 19) recorded their level of daily nostalgia on 30 consecutive days in February-March, 2008. We retrieved relevant temperature data from a local weather station.
- **Study 2:** Following a waiting period (5min) in a room kept at neutral temperature (24°C), participants were placed in either a cold (20°C), neutral (24°C), or warm (28°C) experimental room. They then completed a 5min filler task, which was followed by an assessment of in-the-moment nostalgia.

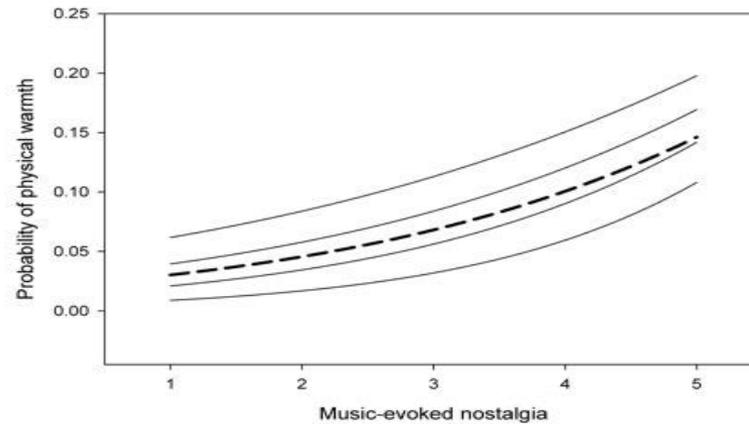
# Environmental temperature and nostalgia





- **Study 3:** As part of an online survey related to musical preferences, participants (534 women, 518 men, 18 who did not report their gender) played four songs in their web browser. For each song, they rated how nostalgic it made them feel and, next, whether it produced the physical sensation of warmth (yes/no).

# Effects of music-induced nostalgia on perceived warmth

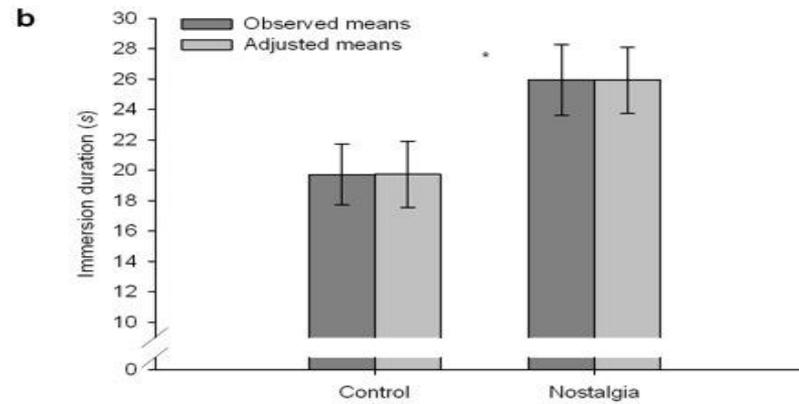
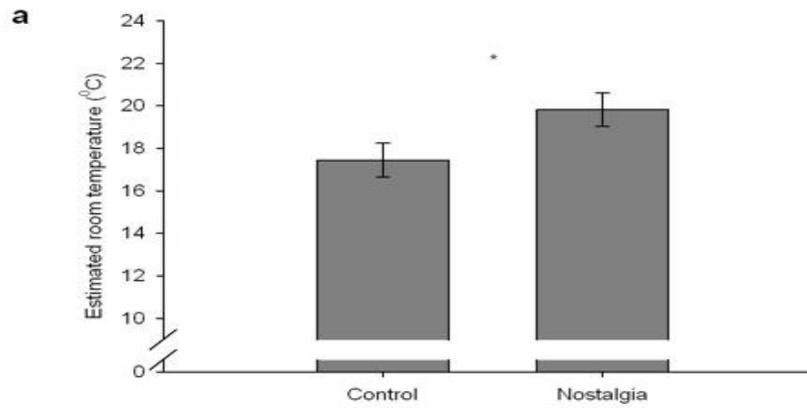




# Methods

- **Study 4:** Participants (N=64), in a cold room (16°C), were instructed to think about either a nostalgic or ordinary autobiographical event. They listed four event-relevant keywords, reflected briefly upon the event and their feelings, and completed a (successful) manipulation check. Participants then estimated ambient temperature (in °C).
- **Study 5:** Participants (N = 80) were randomized to nostalgia and control conditions. The nostalgia manipulation and manipulation check were identical to those of Study 4. They were asked to immerse their dominant hand for as long as possible (max. 2 min.) in 4°C water. The time (in seconds) that elapsed while participants kept their hand immersed was measured with a stopwatch.

# Nostalgia and experienced warmth





# Conclusions

- Nostalgia is triggered by thermoregulatory discomfort: nostalgia was stronger on colder (vs. warmer) days and in a cold (vs. neutral or warm) room.
- In turn, nostalgia increases physical warmth: music-evoked nostalgia predicted the physical sensation of warmth, and
- Writing about a nostalgic (vs. ordinary autobiographical) event made a cold room feel warmer (or less cold).
- Recalling a nostalgic (vs. ordinary autobiographical) event resulted in a greater tolerance of a cold pressor test.
- These parallel effects on temperature (and pain) sensation suggest a broad homeostatic role for nostalgia encompassing multiple interoceptive feelings.

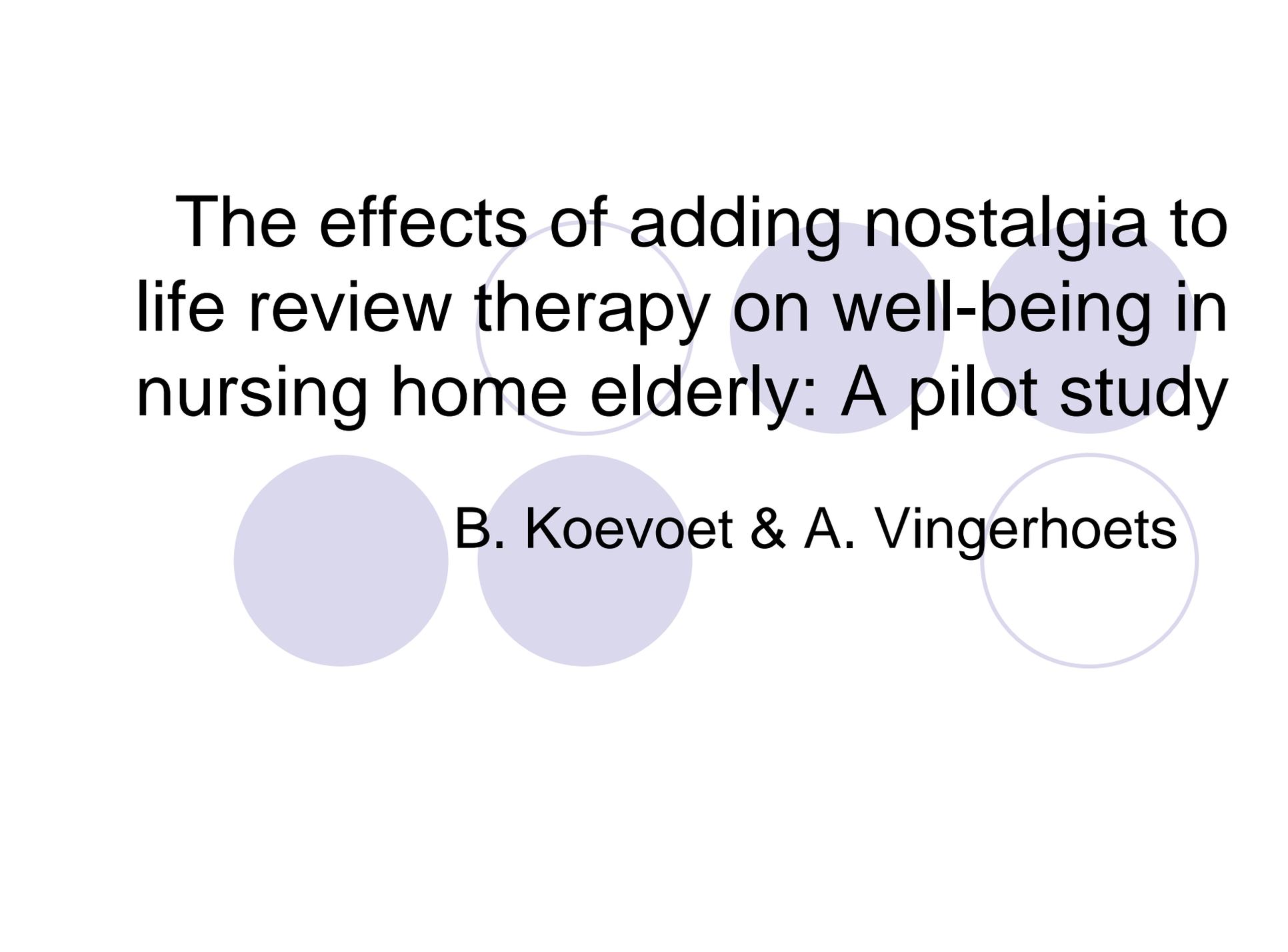


## And further.....

- When people feel nostalgia, they are more willing to offer help to someone in need (Stephan et al., 2014) and to donate money to charity (Zhou et al., 2012).
- Nostalgia additionally increases positive attitudes towards stigmatized groups (e.g., obese people (Turner et al., 2012); patients with mental illness (Turner et al., 2013)).
- Nostalgia promotes empathy (Juhl et al., submitted).

# Functions of Nostalgia

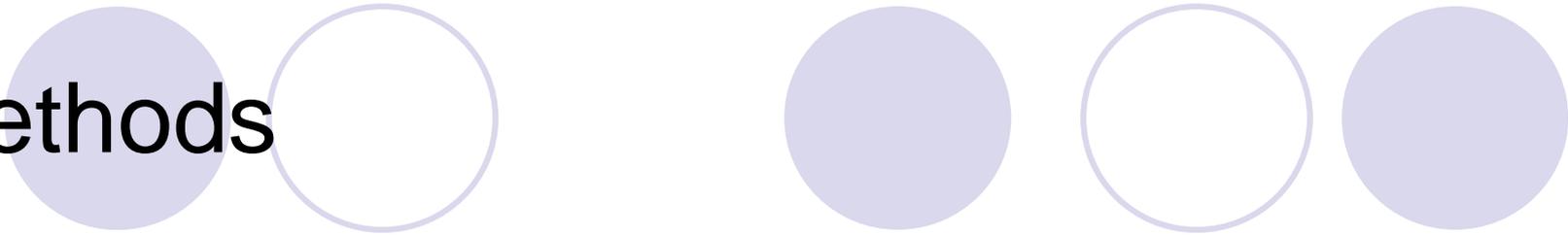
- *Nostalgia Solidifies and Augments Identity*
  - Nostalgia is a source of identity uncertainty–reduction and serves to protect identity.
- *Nostalgia Regenerates and Sustains a Sense of Meaning*
  - Nostalgia alleviates these existential fears by reinforcing
  - The value of cultural traditions and rituals of which one was once a part.
- *Nostalgia Buttresses and Invigorates Social Connectedness*
  - Figures of the past are brought to life and become part of one’s present.
  - This reignition of meaningful relational bonds satisfies one’s need for interpersonal belongingness, thus benefiting self-esteem and identity
- *Nostalgia produces “warmth”*
- *Nostalgia promotes empathy and facilitates prosocial behavior*
- *Nostalgia makes you feel better! It is a resource that promotes health and well-being*



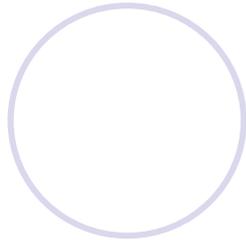
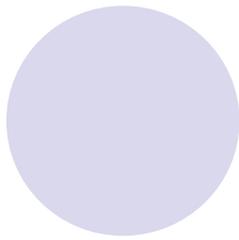
# The effects of adding nostalgia to life review therapy on well-being in nursing home elderly: A pilot study

B. Koevoet & A. Vingerhoets

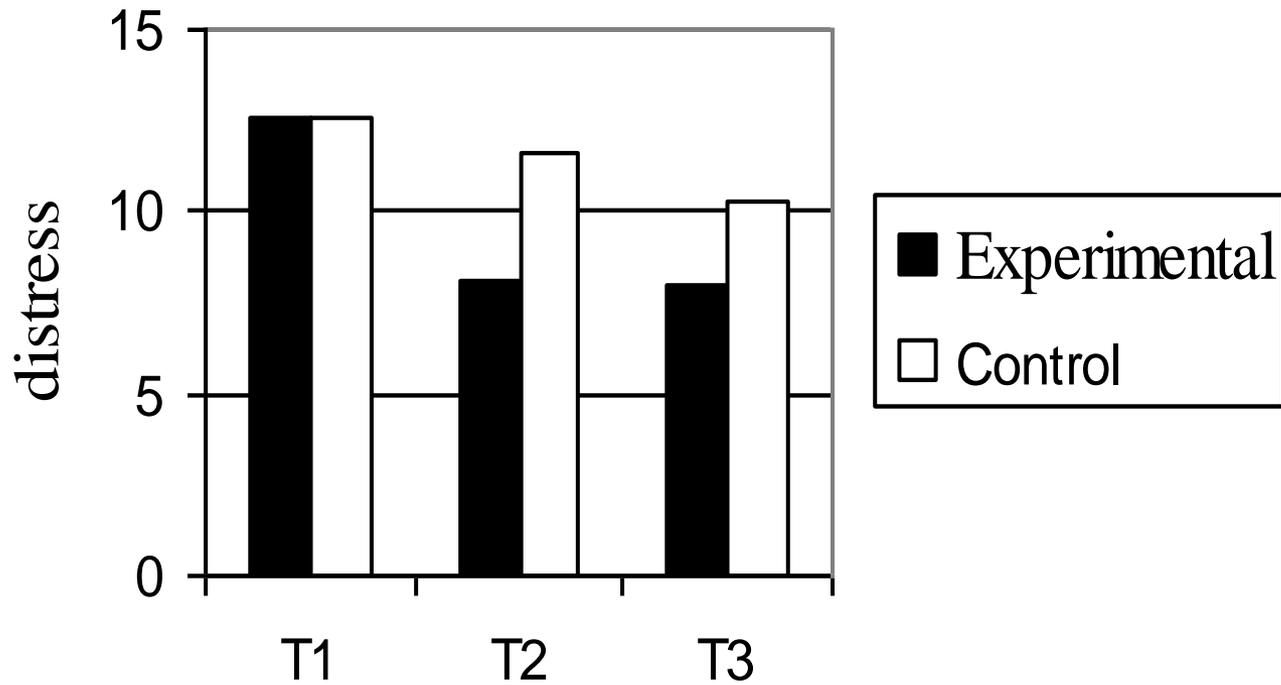
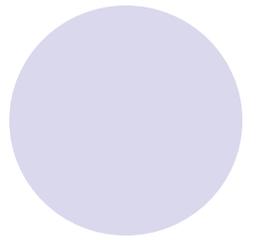
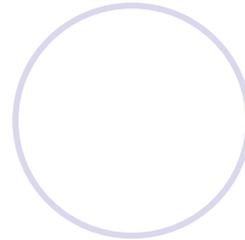
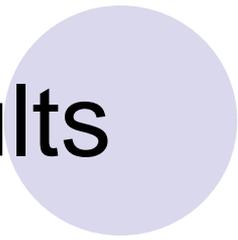
# Methods



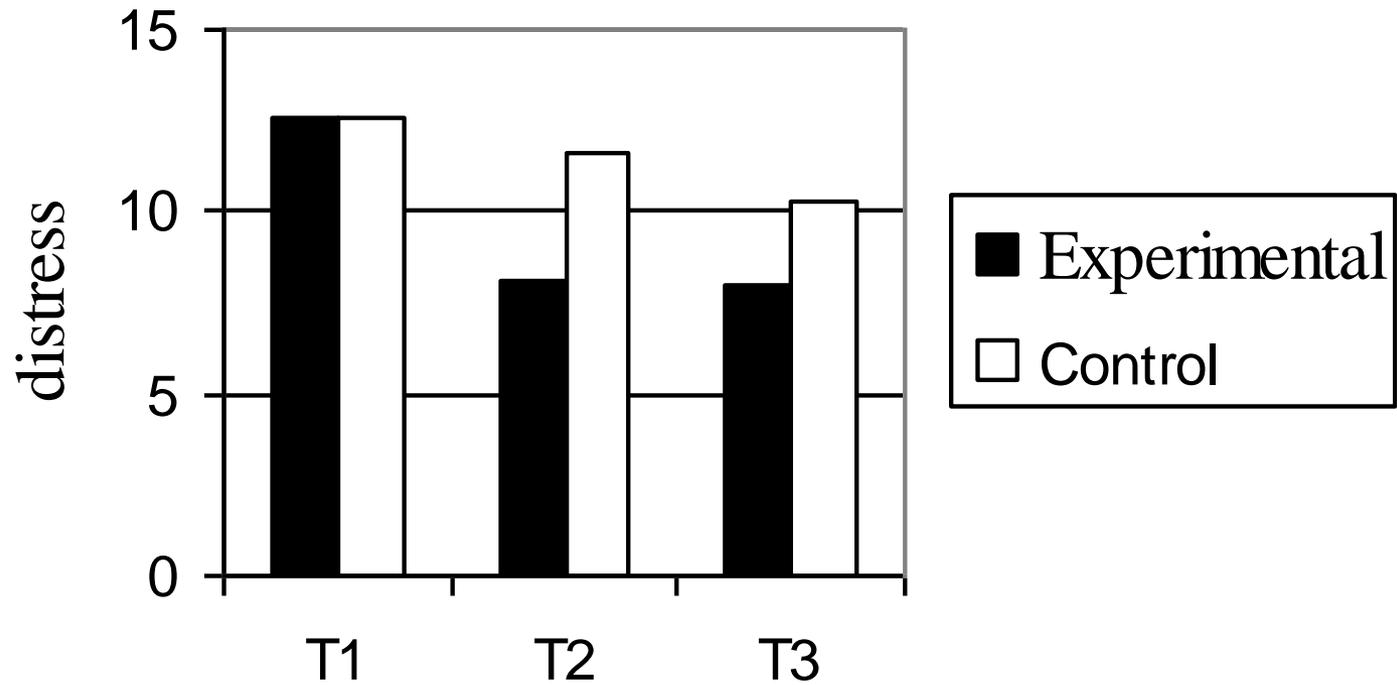
- **Participants:** 12 elderly living in nursing homes. The control group (N=5) received life review therapy only. In the experimental group (N=7) nostalgia was additionally evoked, by exposing the participants to song texts.
- 
- **The outcome measures:** (1) the Geriatric Depression Screen (GDS) measuring depressive symptoms and (2) the Outcome Rating Scale (ORS) measuring psychological distress.



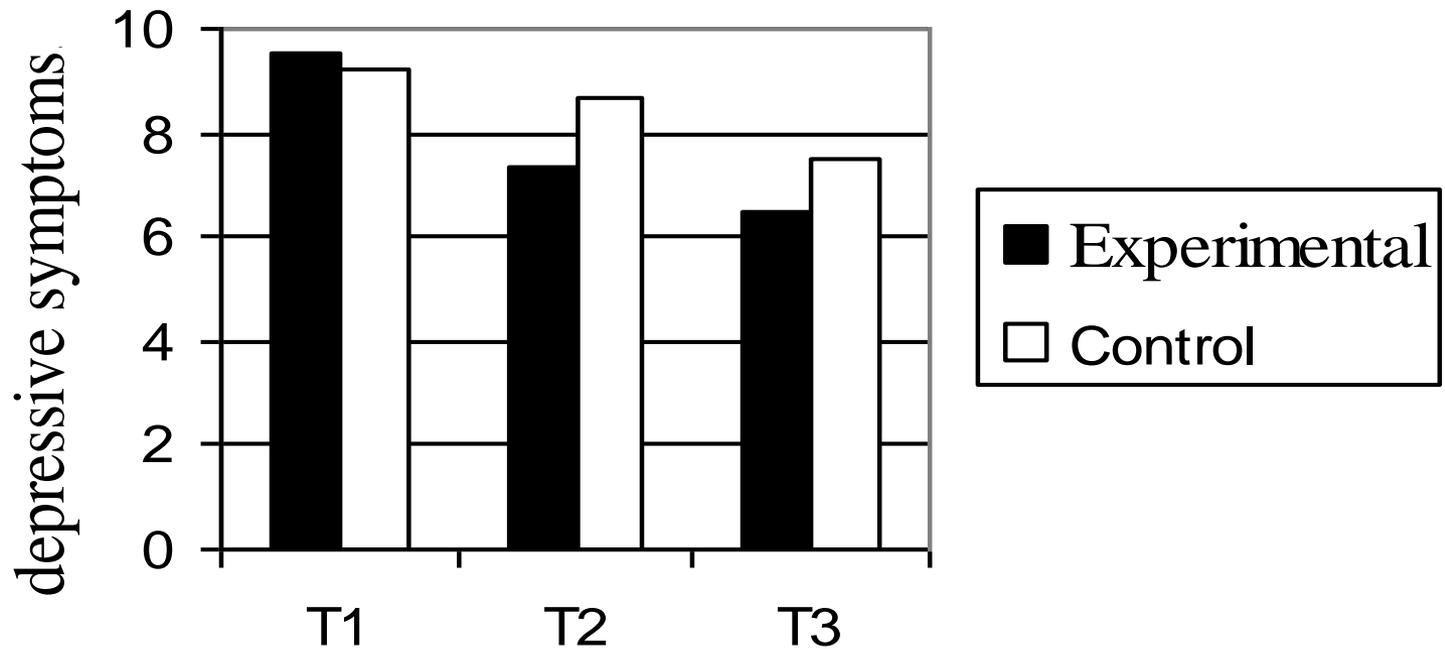
# Results



# Results - distress



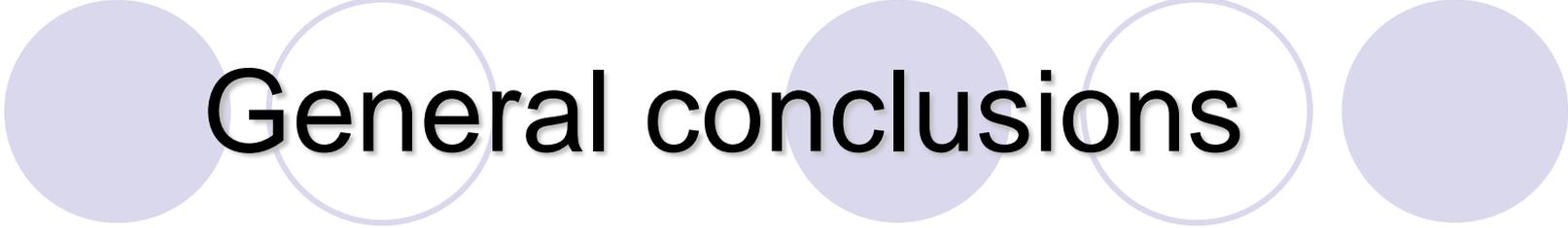
# Results – depressive symptoms





# Conclusion

- The results of this study support the hypothesis that evoking nostalgia has a positive effect on psychological well-being in treating elderly with life review therapy.



# General conclusions

- Whereas homesickness is very similar to an emotional disorder (reactive depression), preventing people from integration in a new environment, nostalgia .....
- Is more similar to a positive emotion
- Seems to facilitate social integration and makes people more resilient
- Intriguing question: Is it possible to help people with homesickness to better cope with that condition, if one tries to actively induce nostalgia?