
Sleep deprivation: Impact on Cognitive Performance

With all of the many moving parts of today's demanding schedules, it is easy to miss the mark of the suggested seven to ten hours of sleep a night. In this article, it states that nearly a third of the U.S. population is not getting enough sleep that is needed for their age. Adolescents are the highest demanding groups of sleep, whom of which are getting the least amount across the groups. Compared to past years, preteens have more stimulants than ever that are aiding in this lack of sleep. Between technologies like cell phones keeping them chatting and televisions keeping them watching, nearly 20% are getting fewer than five hours of sleep a night according to a Sleep In America poll. The CDC says this can attribute to teens making poor decisions because their bodies cannot release hormones that are made to repair tissues that are necessary for their growing bodies.

Another study in the journal called Brain found that middle aged adults that are otherwise healthy that slept poorly for only one night were exposed to a protein that has a hand in Alzheimer's. In comparison, a week of poor sleep exposed them to a second protein that is also responsible for Alzheimer's. It is no secret that a lack of sleep will leave you feeling groggy and unfocused the next day. There have actually been studies that have found a lack of sleep kills brain cells! Studies have also shown that sleep deprivation can be comparable to alcohol intoxication. Limiting your sleep for just one night can actually put you well over the legal drinking limit at 0.1%. Not only does a lack of sleep have an impact on your alertness, but it can impact learning new skills, banking new memories and also solving problems. Chronic sleep deprivation is linked to several psychological issues such as depression and heightened anxiety. When your brain and body do not know how to cope under stress and the tools to relieve stress are taken away(sleep) you are leaving your body on empty, essentially.

As I sit up and write this paper, my entire family is sound asleep. I am not tired however because being up later than everyone else is usually how it goes for me. I have a new five month old breastfed baby, so nursing her to sleep is always first "pre-bed time task". During this time I'm counting all the things I would like to get done before I call it a night myself. Things a mom normally would like to have done before the days endishes, laundry, last minute tidying up. There are many nights I am last to bed, first to rise and these days are the ones I feel least like myself. I agree that days I have slept less are days I feel most groggy and short with my nine year old. A lack of sleep plays a major role in the recovery of your body at a cellular level, as I have gone into great detail about earlier. Prior to my last pregnancy, I was in great shape preparing my body for growing and housing a human life. Hindsight, I can attribute that to a healthy and well rounded diet and a sleep schedule that ensured I was giving my body adequate amount of time to regenerate itself and prepare for the next day.

A year later, when my sleep is far from scheduled and shorter spans of time, I am definitely feeling the effects of this on my body. The article referenced for this paper had some great tips for increasing your sleep time each night that seem easy enough to take into account. Being that I live in Hawaii, keeping the room cool to the temperature suggested (60-67 degrees), is a little harder than if I was living on the mainland. It is a little more realistic to try to drop the temperature with an extra room fan. This will also check a box for another tip to create an ambient space with white noise. Since my older daughter was very young, we have always stuck

to a bedtime routine that has greatly benefit her. It goes without saying that this would be helpful for adults as well, if not more. Incorporating meditation or stretching before bed would definitely get your body relaxed and ready to slip right to sleep. Applying these changes to my nightly routine would improve many aspects of my life. The first change I think I would see would be a big shift in my mood. I am definitely a cranky person if I do not get enough sleep. This overflows into other areas of my life such as diet control. Not sleeping as me grabbing for all the snacks because I feel too groggy to want to think about making a meal or preparing something healthy to eat. These two simple, but so complex, aspects of my life being changed on top of increasing the amount of sleep I am getting will surely have a great impact on my overall health!

eduzaurus.com