

Study Links Teen Depression to Bedtimes

Is your adolescent depressed? Does he/she have a bedtime? Read on.



Study Links Later Parental-Mandated Bedtimes

to

Teens with Depression & Suicidal Thoughts



NEW YORK (June 9, 2009) – A new reason to encourage parents to set and enforce bedtimes for their children and adolescents: New research from Columbia University Medical Center has demonstrated that teens with earlier parental mandated bedtimes got more sleep and had fewer cases of depression and suicidal ideation. The data strengthens the argument that getting enough sleep protects against depression and suicidal thoughts in teens.

The research was presented on Tuesday, June 9 at the 2009 SLEEP conference in Seattle, the 23rd Annual Meeting of the Associated Professional Sleep Societies.

Led by James Gangwisch, Ph.D., assistant professor of clinical psychiatric social work (in psychiatry) at Columbia University Medical Center and the New York State Psychiatric Institute, the study examined data from 15,659 adolescents. A total of 1,143 teens (7.3 percent) suffered from depression and 2,038 (13 percent) had suicidal thoughts. Adolescents with parental-mandated bedtimes at midnight or later were 25 percent more likely to suffer from depression and 20 percent more likely to have suicidal ideation compared with adolescents who had parental-mandated bedtimes of 10 p.m. or earlier.

“It is a common perception and societal expectation that adolescents do not need as much sleep as preadolescents, yet studies suggests that adolescents may actually require more sleep,” said Gangwisch. “Studies have found that adolescents do not go to bed early enough to compensate for earlier school start times, and transitions to earlier school start times have been shown to be associated with significant sleep deprivation.”

According to Dr. Gangwisch, the study supports the argument that inadequate sleep could lead to depression. “Adolescents with later parental-mandated bedtimes went to bed later, got less sleep, and were less likely to get enough sleep. Short sleep duration explained the relationship between parental-mandated bedtimes and depression, functioning as a risk factor for depression and suicidal ideation.”

In this epidemiological study, Dr. Gangwisch and his team looked at parental-mandated bedtimes, rather than adolescent reported bedtimes because the presence of depression in an adolescent can affect their choice of bedtime, but it would not be expected to affect their parent’s choice of a set bedtime. They found that adolescents whose parents mandated earlier bedtimes went to bed earlier, got more sleep, were more likely to report getting enough sleep, and were less likely to suffer from depression and suicidal ideation. The actual time adolescents went to bed closely matched what time their parents told them to go to bed.

The American Academy of Sleep Medicine (AASM) recommends that teens get a little more than nine hours of sleep per night. Tips from the AASM to help parents establish an appropriate bedtime for their teen are available at <http://www.sleepeducation.com/Topic.aspx?id=73>.

Additional Resources for Depression (click on the links below):

DEPRESSION, ANXIETY: [Therapy can break cycle of passing from parents to kids](#)

MOOD: [Exercise high can last for some time](#)

Depression and Bipolar Support Alliance: 447-1515