



Mini Review Paper

The Role of Sleep in Happiness and Wellbeing

Shubha Dube* and Rashmi Sharma

Department of Home Science, Human Development, University of Rajasthan, Jaipur, India
drshubhadubey@gmail.com

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Abstract

Present day's lifestyle has greatly influenced the everyday rhythm of our life and sleep being one of them. Sleep is a state of relaxation for the mind and body, during which consciousness and volition are in abeyance and bodily functions are partly suspended. Chronic sleep deprivation like apnea, insomnia and disturbed sleep can lead to depression, hypertension and various health problems. Sleep is one of the most important aspect that affect our happiness and wellbeing. Researches shows that people who sleep well are more happy and healthy, they feel enthusiasm in their life and actively participate in all activities of daily life. They enjoy their life fully and stay fit whereas the people who don't sleep well may sense laziness and dizziness in the daily activities of daily living. They report depression, heart diseases, stress, anxiety, obesity kind of problems etc. they don't enjoy their life to its fullest and take it like a burden. Disturbed sleeps affect their family relations and spoils their happiness and wellbeing as well.

Keywords: Sleep, Happiness, Wellbeing, Sleep disturbance.

Introduction

For the functions of our body sleep is necessary, it provides rest to the body and rejuvenation in the neurons, tissues and cells which are repaired during the time of sleep. Sleep is also helpful to conserve energy, brain detoxification, and controlling thermoregulation in the brain. Ultimately, sleep is very necessary for the human beings. Sleep of eight hours in a night is recommended by the scientists to promote thinking and efficient performance. On the other side, within this fast paced society, few people receive the sleep that the body needs. Ultimately, a very large section of the population is been affected by sleep problems¹. Sleep is also very important for mental and physical well-being. It is one of the most important factors responsible for the maintenance of a healthy human being, thus representing a homeostatic need required for living². Both quality and quantity of sleep are imperative to the optimal performance of brain activity in controlling our emotions³.

Sleep is of two types in human beings. NREM (Non- rapid eye movement) Sleep and REM (Rapid eye movement). REM sleep is "an active period of sleep marked by intense brain activity. Brain waves are fast and desynchronized, similar to those in the waking state. Breathing becomes more rapid, irregular, and shallow; eyes move rapidly in various directions and limb muscles become temporarily paralyzed. Heart rate increases and blood pressure rises. This also is the sleep stage in which most dreams occur." NREM sleep is characterized by a reduction in physiological activity. A person's brain waves slow down and gains amplitude, both breathing and the heart rate slows down, and the person's blood pressure drops, As sleep deepens⁴.

A number of sleep disorders can disrupt our sleep quality. Sleep disorders are the changes in sleeping habits and patterns of individual. Symptoms and sign of sleep disorders include irregular breathing, excessive daytime sleepiness, or difficulty in sleeping, increased movement during sleep, and abnormality in sleep behaviors. Sleep disorders affect our overall health, safety and quality of life⁵. The existence of regular nocturnal awakenings; long sleep deprivation or prolonged periods of wakefulness during the sleep period or even a number of transient arousals are taken as evidence of insomnia⁶. Obstructive sleep apnea is a disease characterized by repeated upper airway obstruction during sleep⁷. Restless leg syndrome have uncomfortable feelings in legs (and occasionally arms or other parts of the body) and an irresistible urge to move legs to reduce the sensations⁸. Narcolepsy is a disorder marked by uncontrollable sleep attacks, extreme daytime sleepiness, and cataplexy (a sudden loss of muscle tone, usually lasting up to half an hour)⁹.

According to the National Sleep Foundation (NSF), for an individual's wellbeing and fitness sleep is very essential. Large number of people experiencing inadequate sleep and many of them are suffering from lack of sleep. NSF conducted a survey (1999-2004) which exposes that over 70 different sleep disorders is been suffered by more than 40 million or 60 percent of American adults and they are having sleep problems for a few nights in one week. Mostly, those with these kinds of problems go untouched and undiagnosed. In addition, greater than 40 percent of them experiencing sleepiness during day time and it affect their daily activities for few days in a month – with sleepiness problem for some days or one week or more is

reporting by 20 percent people. In addition, sleep troubles for a few nights or more in a week experience by 69 percent children¹⁰.

Importance of Sleep for General Wellbeing

At behavioral point, the effect on wellbeing of insomnia can be seen in the researches it have been shown that insomnia is linked with low quality of life. It has been found that insomnia is related with work absenteeism, increased health care utilization, and reduction in time devoted to recreational activity and diminished work productivity¹¹. It should be noted that the studies has shown that the rate of absenteeism in healthy sleepers is lower than the people who are having insomnia¹².

In the survey of greater than 7,000 U.S. adults shown that people who said they got less sleep also had a lower overall well-being than those who reported getting more sleep. The scores of the well-being is based on the participants' answers to questions about their financial lives, social relations, community involvement and physical health was calculated and the survey also indicated that 42 percent of Americans gets in sufficient sleep less than 7 hours in a night, which is the smallest amount for people ages 18 and older recommended by the National Sleep Foundation¹³.

Sleep problems and lack of sleep can effect a lot of things from personal and work productivity to behavioral and relationship troubles. Severe consequences can cause by Sleep problems. According to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, More than 1,500 lives and cause at least 100,000 motor vehicle accidents each year claimed by drowsy driving¹⁴.

Research studies shows that insufficient sleep can alter brain activity. If a person is having sleep problem, he may having trouble in decision making, solving problems, controlling his actions and emotions, and having difficulty to cope with change. Lack of sleep is also associated with suicide, depression and behavior of risk taking. Sleep is also very necessary for our physical health. Sufficient sleeps is helpful in repairing and heal of our heart and blood vessels. Constant insufficient sleep is connected to a greater risk of diseases of heart, diseases of kidney, high blood pressure, stroke and diabetes. Healthy development and physical growth is also supported by sufficient sleep. Deep sleep triggers the body to release the hormone that promotes normal growth in children and teens. This hormone boosts the muscle mass and helps in repairing cells and tissues in children, teens, and adults. Puberty and fertility is also affected by sleep¹⁵.

Evidences shown that a association between cardiovascular disease, high risk of stroke, increased blood pressure and other long-term health consequences and short and long term sleep loss. Lack of Sleep has been related with a increase in blood pressure during the night that lasts throughout the day. Studies

revealed an association between too much or too little sleep and increased risk of coronary heart disease in women¹⁶. Healthy Sleep and breathing rates can fall and rise and our blood pressure can be variable. These changes throughout the night in blood pressure and breathing rate and heart seem to promote cardiovascular health. Heart disease and increased risk of stroke may be marked by some sleep related abnormalities. Some research studies found that people who were repetitively don't get sufficient sleep have elevated level than the normal blood levels of C-reactive protein, it is the sign of swelling. Increased levels of this protein can show a high risk of a condition called atherosclerosis, or hardening of the arteries. Sleep's affects on the release of sex hormones and also contributes to fertility and puberty. Consequently, such type of women may be at increased risk of miscarriage that work at night and tend to get lack sleep¹⁷.

Importance of Sleep for Living Happy Life

Researchers suggest that the effects of aging may slow down by the experience of joy and happiness by stimulating health-enhancing behaviors such as restorative sleep. It has been pointed out that, whereas, possessing relatively stable high levels of positive emotion may be conducive to enhance sleep, poor sleep may be linked with unstable feelings because such emotions are subject to the vicissitudes of daily influences. These conclusions are novel because they point to the complex dynamics linked with sleep and fragile happiness¹⁸.

For psychological, emotional and physical health as well as a person's work quality and productivity, sleep is essential. Scott stated that stress consists of negative emotions and is the source of sleep deprivation and disturbance. A further study is supporting this claim, signifying that some positive effect makes important contributions to prediction of the quality of sleep. In Pakistan, a study was conducted on the association among happiness and quality of sleep in students. It was found that there was a significant connection in between quality of sleep and happiness¹⁹.

Sleeping insufficiently ruins our day. We all know that, and researches have shown it too, especially in a research study conducted on 909 working women. Happiness is more affected by a insufficient night's rest than tight deadlines of work, and it had an even greater impact on mood than significant income differences in the group. Tend to have more symptoms of depression, lower self esteem, and more anxiety to the people who sleep less - that's an connection and it's possible that these symptoms cause lack of sleep or sleep problems. Yet, research studies reveals that lack of sleep has stronger impact on mood than it does on intellectual capabilities or fine motor and large motor functions, which is a strong indicator that for our healthy growth and development sleep plays an important role²⁰.

It is well known that mood can be affect adversely by sleep loss. After one night spent turning and tossing become us irritable.

Medical evidence has shown links of inadequate sleep with anxiety, sadness and anger. University of Pennsylvania researchers found that, study subjects reported feeling more mentally exhausted, stressed, angry and sad with overall scores for vigor declining gradually during the test period, when they allowed to sleep only for 4.5 hours a night for one week. Their mood scores increased dramatically, when they were allowed to get sufficient sleep²¹.

Conclusion

Sleep is an important aspect of our daily life. Sleep affects our daily routine, health and wellbeing, family and social relationships etc. it also has a huge impact on our happiness. People cannot live happily without adequate sleep. Poor quality of sleep affects our quality of life and it affects our immune system and hormonal system as well. Because of sleep deprivation person's body systems get disturbed and he gets diseases like – stress, depression, hypertension, cardiovascular disease, obesity, diabetes, atherosclerosis, fertility problems in women etc. These problems make person's quality of life worse. When quality of life is not good then person suffers with compromised physical conditions, poor financial conditions, bad relationships with family and friends and inadequate social activities. Such conditions have an adverse effect on happiness. One can't be happy with these problems. So, we should take sleep as an important need and should sleep 6-8 hours daily. Do not use any of drugs (nicotine and caffeine) and medicines (regular use of tranquilizers) which can affect our sleep. Eat healthy and nutritious food and avoid junk food. We should include exercise and yoga in our daily routine. These small practices can improve our sleep and make us healthy and happy.

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