

Is lack of sleep affecting students at our high school?

Meitoku Gijuku Junior and Senior High School

INTRODUCTION

A good night sleep is important to keep us healthy and help our brains function so we can learn and be generally happy.

Globally, most high school students sleep less than the recommended 8-10 hours per night, and many don't realise how deeply it affects their mood, mental and physical health. So are we really getting enough sleep?

The National Survey of Children's Health looked at the amount of sleep of children in the U.S.A. They found that 77% of high school students did not get enough sleep.

The University of Stanford medicine childrens health recent research says that many teenagers check their messages and social media, watch online videos or play video games the hour before they go to sleep. Staring at screen for long periods before sleeping can signal your brain to stay awake rather than get ready to sleep.

The US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention say that lack of sleep increases chances of weight gain, stress, type 2 diabetes, heart disease, high blood pressure and even stroke. It also impacts children's ability to be alert in class and perform daily activities better.

This research in the USA made us think, is this also an issue for high school students at our school?



OBJECTIVE

Through this research, we want to find out the sleep patterns of high school students at our school. Do they get enough sleep? If not, Why aren't they getting enough time to sleep? What can we do to change habits and how can we improve the quality of sleep for our students?

METHODOLOGY

We conducted surveys with our fellow Meitoku students to do this research. We surveyed about 40 students, and among them there were 25 students who live in dormitories at our school, and 15 students who live outside and travel to school daily. We compared this information with other research in the USA.

RESULTS

From the 40 students surveyed, 37% said that they slept over 7 hours of sleep on average, with only 3% saying that they slept the recommended 8-10 hours each night.

The remaining 63% said that they slept on average less than 6 hours per night, with 16% sleeping less than 4 hours a night.

58% of these students reported always or often using electronic devices after midnight.

52% said that they always or often felt sleepy in class, with only 18% saying they never or rarely experienced sleepiness during lesson time.

27% claimed that they never or rarely felt rested, while 27% always or usually felt rested. The remaining 46% said that they sometimes felt rested.

ANALYSIS

From these results, it can be seen that the issue of lack of sleep in high school students is as much, if not more of an issue in Japan as it is in the USA.

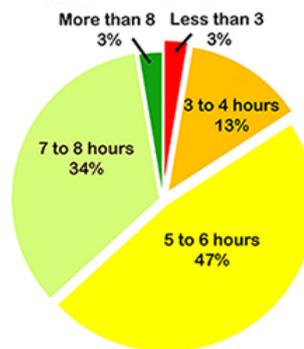
With 60% of students getting less than 6 hours sleep a night, it can be connected to over half of the students surveyed saying that they feel sleepy in most if not all classes that they attend.

Furthermore with only 27% of students saying that they usually or always feel rested, it can be understood that lack of sleep impacts high school students' academic performance.

Factors that are affecting the amount of sleep high school students get include early start times (which is much earlier than in American schools) and staying up later to study and complete homework. During the survey, many students noted that, they do their homework after midnight resulting late night sleep. Additionally, approximately a third mentioned that their sleep was often interrupted by room mates in dormitories or family members for students living at home.

Another major factor causing high school students to sleep less is due to device usage. A staggering 58% of students always or often use their phones or computers after midnight. 40% percent of these say that they use their devices every night after 12am. This makes it impossible for these students to get an adequate night's rest before they need to wake up and be at school on time. This has a significant impact on how much they can learn in class, which is again reflected in the results of students feeling sleepy in class most of the time.

Average hours of sleep per night



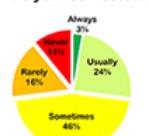
Do you use a device after midnight?



Do you feel sleepy in class?



Do you feel rested?



CONCLUSION

As we can see, not getting enough sleep is a real issue for students at our school, similar to trends around the world. In this current time, the combination of work load, daily schedules as well as distractions from technology and social media has made it a challenge for young people to get enough rest each night.

From our research, we have discovered some possible solutions to these problems. These include helping high school students improve their time management and reducing their overall homework load, which could significantly improve their sleep patterns.

Additionally, educating students about how important adequate sleep is will equip them to be aware of their own actions. The distractions of social media and video games, which are designed to keep everybody 'plugged in' is a challenging issue to overcome, but if young people can reduce these habits even a little, it will make a massive improvement to their lives. If teenagers can understand how lack of sleep can affect their minds, bodies and relationships, they will gain motivation to make changes for the better.

Together, these strategies can create a more balanced routine that allows teenagers to get the sleep they need to stay focused, energised, healthy and successful in school.

REFERENCES

- US Centres for Disease Control and Prevention <https://www.cdc.gov/sleep/about/index.html>
- The University of Stanford Medicine Childrens Health <https://med.stanford.edu/news/all-news/2015/10/among-teens-sleep-deprivation-an-epidemic.html>
- The National Survey of Childrens Health <https://www.census.gov/programs-surveys/nsch.html>