Are College Students Receiving Enough Sleep?

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Abstract

Sleep is wonderful. When an individual is in college, that student has to learn how to balance school assignments, a job, and a social life. College takes a lot out of a student whether it be time, money, or sleep. This research will focus on if college students are receiving enough sleep and the consequences one may face if so many hours of sleep is not reached.

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Are College Students Receiving Enough Sleep?

College takes a lot out of a student, whether it be time, money, or sleep. This research will focus on if college students are receiving enough sleep and the consequences one may face if so many hours of sleep is not reached. The first category will examine a survey taken by 14 college students.

**English 3000 Survey**

When the class took this survey, many felt tired and stressed. These feelings are very common among college students. In this class, many students are between the ages of 20 and 27 years old and 57% students are females. With English 3000 being an upper level class, all the students are either in his/her junior or senior year. When a student is a junior or senior, that individual will have the system figured out and have a better understanding of how to balance everything. Although these students are almost finished with college, stress and lack of sleep is at an all time high. The fifth question from this survey asked, “Do you believe you have received enough sleep throughout your college career? Explain.” Every student responded with, “No!” One student answered, “Definitely not! I sacrifice sleep to get my assignments completed, keep up with my social life, and maintain a fulltime job. There is just not enough time for it all” (Survey, Anonymous, 2017). Another question that is important is, “How many hours of sleep would you say you get on an average day?” This class of students usually receive anywhere from 4-6 hours per day. That is not enough sleep for a person who is bogged down with so many tasks.

The next category to be examined is another survey that was uploaded to Facebook.

**Facebook Survey**

The researcher designed a survey for her Facebook friends to take. The responses from this survey will not be biased since most of the participants do not go to college. The age group
of these participants ranged from 20 years old up to 70. This gives the researcher a good sample of people to survey. For this survey, there were 16 participants. Out of these participants, 11 of them are not college students while the remaining 5 are. The participants of this survey told the researcher that they obtain anywhere from 5-10 hours of sleep on an average day. This shows these participants receive more sleep than the English 3000 classmates do. With today’s society being heavily involved in technology, the fourth question asked, “Do you watch T.V or get on social media websites before going to bed.?” 87.50% participants answered this question with yes. One person responded, “I do both before going to bed. I like checking shows on tv, posts, or emails. But once I get done and check the clock, and cannot believe how much time has passed, leaving less time to sleep” (Facebook, Anonymous, 2017). When asked if college students receive enough sleep, all participants responded with no. With most of the participants not in college, it is very noticeable that college students lack the sleep needed to properly function, or balance life.

**Fitbit Data**

The researcher tested herself for a better understanding of her sleeping routine. The researcher is a 20-year-old female in her junior year of college. Ashley has worn a Fitbit on her left arm for almost a year. Fitbits are known as devices that help an individual keep track of the steps taken in a day, how many miles one did in a day, and the calories one may have burned during the day. When a Fitbit is worn at night, the device will also track an individual’s sleep routine. The Fitbit has an app where all the information is organized into categories. The sleep category displays the information into graphs and charts. Below, are graphs from Ashley’s Fitbit. The first photo shows how much sleep Ashley received on December 2, 2017. This device will track when a person falls asleep, how restless one is during the night, how many times one may
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wake up, and when one wakes up to begin the day (Fitbit 2017). The second photo displays how much sleep Ashley has received for the month of November.

For the month of November, Ashley received an average of 8 hours and 33 minutes of sleep (Fitbit 2017). Although that may seem like a lot of hours, one must include being restless and awake during a single night. When an individual is restless and awake during the night, that is sleep being lost that is needed. On December 2, 2017, Ashley was up working on papers, reading, and studying for finals. On this night, she only received 6 hours and 34 minutes of sleep. However, when the photo is analyzed, Ashley lost a total of 25 minutes of sleep because of restlessness or being awake. Until the researcher got her Fitbit, she did not realize how active she is during bedtime. Now that several people have been analyzed, the researcher will look at what scholars have to say about college students sleep routines.
**Importance of Sleep**

The first scholarly information will focus on the average hours of sleep college students get, what is really needed, and the consequences one may face from lack of sleep. According to the University Health Center at UGA (2017), adults need anywhere from 7-8 hours of sleep. When reviewing how many hours the students from the English 3000 class are receiving, it shows that those students are lacking almost 3 required hours of sleep; however, the participants from the Facebook survey are obtaining the required hours of sleep. Could it be college students have too much going on and sleep is not a top priority? The average college student will get about 6 hours of sleep everyday (UGA 2017). Therefore, it is clear students do not receive the proper amount of sleep needed to focus on school and live events.

When an individual lacks sleep, numerous side effects may occur. For college students, these effects can impact their educational career. The five most common consequences are a lower immune system, feeling even more stressed out, weight gain, lower GPA, and feeling depressed or anxious (UGA 2017). With sleep affecting a student’s body and grades, this topic is more of an issue than most people realize. The next category will focus on how technology disrupts sleeping routines, and causes negative habits for bedtime.

**Technology**

The world today is heavily involved in technology. Regardless if an individual is 4 years old or 70 years old, that individual knows how to operate at least one device. This makes the researcher wonder, does technology impact how much sleep is gained or lost on an average night? As stated by Shochat (2012), keeping up with all the technology and social media websites during the night will disrupt an individual sleeping pattern. A good example would be a television show. Most shows have a new episode once a week. New episodes usually premiere in
the late hours of the night, causing a person to stay up late to catch up on the new gossip for the week. This activity will mess up some individuals sleep routine once a week. A routine is like a relationship, the person involved must stay committed and not break the routine. The final category will observe how daylight savings affects an individual’s sleep routine.

Time Change

Changing the time occurs twice a year, the fall and in the spring. Daylight savings time was invented to help farmers have more daylight in the spring and summer to plant crops. According to Komaroff (2017), a single hour shift can mess up some peoples sleep cycle for several days or weeks. This brought awareness to the researcher. In both surveys the participants were asked, “With the recent time change, has your body adjusted yet?” (Surveys 2017). The responses from both surveys were interesting. The college students were evenly divided between yes/no. On the Facebook survey, 87% of the participants take days to weeks for their body to adjust. Could this be because of age, or does time change really disrupt peoples sleeping routines despite being older or a college student?

Conclusion

Everybody enjoys sleep, and it is a key necessity for one to survive. Being a college student is hard when a student is trying to complete assignments, maintain a job, and keep a healthy social life. Instead of preschoolers getting nap time, college students should be required to take a nap class every semester. When students lack sleep, negative consequence will arise. Essential point is college students are not receiving enough sleep to maintain a positive, healthy lifestyle.
References


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