



Sleep

Written by Dominique Angerame

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Southern students like senior Brian Buczacki, believe that sleep is extremely important, but admit to not getting enough of quality sleep. "Sleep is very important because that is when your body repairs itself for the next day," said Buczacki, a liberal studies major. Before college, said Buczacki, he used to go to bed between 10 p.m. and 11 p.m., but now he usually does not go to bed until about 3 a.m.--and he wakes up much later. Buczacki said that although his classes start later in the day, sleeping through the entire morning is not a good sleeping habit.

He said that he drinks about four cups of coffee per day: one when he wakes up, two throughout the day and one at about 2 a.m. to get in that last hour of studying.

Buczacki has a prescription to the stimulant drug Aderol because he suffers from Attention Deficit Disorder (ADD). He said that because the Aderol helps him focus, energy drinks and coffee just help him stay awake.

"Energy drinks make people crash hard at the end of the day," said Buczacki. "but being prescribed to Aderol and drinking energy drinks makes the crash even worse."

In a 2007 article by MayoClinic.com, experts said that drinking too much caffeine throughout the day could greatly affect sleeping habits.

"For example, you drink caffeinated beverages because you have trouble staying awake during the day," said experts from MayoClinic. "But the caffeine keeps you from falling asleep at night, shortening the length of time you sleep." Their studies show that caffeine increases the number of wake-up

times per night and also interferes with deep sleep. With less sleep and poor quality sleep, people are generally more tired the next day, they said.

Although Buczacki is guilty of using caffeine to stay awake, he said that he protests against the use of energy drinks and coffee as study aids for college students because it is very unhealthy.

Betty C. Jung, RN, MPH, CHES, an adjunct public health professor for graduates and undergraduates at Southern, also believes that sleep is extremely important. "It is during sleep that our body replenishes its resources and builds up its immune system," said Jung. "When the body does not get enough rest, it is an added stressor as the body tries to find the energy to meet daily demands."

Jung said that she thinks students are very restless because she sees them falling asleep in class and walking around with cups of coffee or cans of soda. Jung said that these are very bad habits for students to have because caffeine is considered a psychoactive drug

that can lead to dependency. People who abuse caffeine can have severe withdrawal symptoms, said Jung.

"Daily coffee drinkers can tell you that if they stop drinking coffee for one day they will get a bad headache," said Jung.

Buczacki said that these stimulants have now become more of an "addiction," rather than just a study aid.

According to Jung, some common effects of caffeine on students are anxiety, excitability, restlessness, dizziness, irritability, inability to concentrate, gastrointestinal aches, headaches that don't seem to go away, and especially trouble sleeping.

Stephanie Wynn, a junior elementary education major, thinks that sleep deprivation is a huge issue among college students, especially herself. She said that she has only gotten about six hours of sleep in three days. Wynn said she practically lives on Diet Coke for the caffeine because she doesn't drink coffee. "For some people, six hours a night may be adequate. One or two in 100 can get by on five hours," said Cornell psychologist James B. Maas, Ph.D. "Many others will need as much as nine or 10 hours. Whatever the amount, most people need 60 to 90 minutes more sleep than they presently get."

Jung said that one of the requirements in her public health 201 class is that her students keep a diary for one week about what they can do in their daily lives to improve their health. She said some of the students chose getting more sleep as a personal change.

"It was interesting to read how difficult it was for them to make the change," said Jung. "And for those who did, they discovered they had more energy for their daily activities and can begin to enjoy their morning and evening classes more." "Lack of sleep has caused some serious health problems for Wynn. Because she already suffers from severe asthma, lack of sleep makes her symptoms flare up, sometimes resulting in hospitalization." "I get rundown extremely easily," said Wynn. "It starts with a bad head cold, then it moves to my chest, and then my asthma gets very severe."

Maas said that people should try to make up for lost sleep as soon as possible, even though lost sleep cannot be replaced all at once. Wynn said that the sleep deprivation she is experiencing this week is because she has had an exam everyday. Wynn said that professors overload the students; they assign homework as if students only have to do work for that one class. Wynn and Buczacki both said they are feeling the effects of sleep deprivation--for others, not as much. Christopher Karjanis, a junior business marketing major, has a different approach regarding the reasons why students might be sleep deprived.

"I think that sleep deprivation is only a problem for college students who work," said Karjanis. "Everyone else just doesn't know how to manage their time."

Since beginning school, Karjanis said that he has been a working student every semester except for the fall of 2007. He said that he is taking this semester off from working so that he can concentrate on his schoolwork. Since not working, Karjanis said he only drinks one cup of coffee per day, but it was much more when he worked while taking classes. There is one thing Karjanis, Buczacki, and Wynn have in common--they have all seen multiple students fall asleep in class. Wynn said that one particular student in her class uses class time as naptime. This student sleeps for the entire hour and fifteen

minutes of class, said Wynn. Maas had helpful tips to help people with irregular sleeping patterns. "Establish a regular sleep cycle. Go to bed every night at the same time and wake up without an alarm clock at the same time every morning – including weekends," said Maas. "Within six weeks the hours you spend in bed will begin to synchronize with the sleepy phase of your biological clock."

Jung also had tips for students to get a better night sleep. She said that keeping the dorm room dark is essential. Lights, TV's, computers are some major distractions when trying to fall asleep. She said that exercising during the day is also a good stress reliever and helps people to sleep better at night. According to Jung, there are now studies showing that lack of sleep impacts our hormones and is responsible for the obesity epidemic. She said that eating better during the day could improve sleep at night and improve overall health. "Eating small meals throughout the day is a helpful and healthy way to control weight gain," said Jung. "Snack on more fruits and vegetables, and just avoid the chips and baked goods aisles in the supermarket. Drink water and real fruit juices-- and skip the soda, coffee, and high energy drinks."

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