

Excessive mobile phone use affects sleep in teens

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Teenagers who excessively use their cell phone are more prone to disrupted sleep, restlessness, stress and fatigue, according to a research abstract that will be presented on Monday at SLEEP 2008, the 22nd Annual Meeting of the Associated Professional Sleep Societies (APSS).

The study, authored by Gaby Badre, MD, PhD, of Sahlgren's Academy in Gothenburg, Sweden, focused on 21 healthy subjects, between 14-20 years of age, with regular working/studying hours and without sleep problems. The subjects were broken up into two groups: a control group (three men, seven women) and the experimental group (three men, eight women).

The control group made less than five calls and/or sent five text messages a day, while the experimental group made more than 15 calls and/or sent 15 text messages a day. The subjects were then asked questions regarding their lifestyle and sleep habits.

According to the results, when compared to subjects with restricted use of cell phones, young people with excessive use of cell phones (both talking and text messaging) have increased restlessness with more careless lifestyles, more consumption of stimulating beverages, difficulty in falling asleep and disrupted sleep, and more susceptibility to stress and fatigue. They behave more like larks than owls, suggesting a delayed biological clock.

“Addiction to cell phone is becoming common. Youngsters feel a group

pressure to remain inter-connected and reachable round the clock. Children start to use mobile phones at an early stage of their life. There seem to be a connection between intensive use of cell phones and health compromising behaviour such as smoking, snuffing and use of alcohol,” said Dr. Badre.

Dr. Badre stresses the importance of good sleep for young people.

“It is adamant/necessary to increase the awareness among youngsters of the negative effects of excessive mobile phone use on their sleep-wake patterns, with serious health risks as well as attention and cognitive problems,” said Dr. Badre.

It is recommended that adolescents get nine hours of nightly sleep.

Source: American Academy of Sleep Medicine

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