Adolescent obesity linked to reduced sleep caused by technology use and caffeine

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According to a research abstract that will be presented at SLEEP 2009, the 23rd Annual Meeting of the Associated Professional Sleep Societies, adolescent obesity is associated with having less sleep. Reduction in sleep could be related to a higher caffeine intake, more hours of technology use and increased symptoms of sleep disorders (such as snoring).

Results indicate that children who slept less consumed more caffeine and had more hours of screen time (use of television, Internet, computer and video games). A higher body mass index (BMI) was also associated with shorter sleep duration. More hours of screen time were also associated with higher caffeine consumption.

According to lead author Amy Drescher, PhD, research specialist at the University of Arizona in Tucson, there are many reasons that kids gain weight, and inadequate sleep is just one of them.

"Boys had significantly more vigorous exercise, recreational activity than girls," said Drescher. "The sleep and obesity connection is not always seen because factors such as exercise may keep weight in check."

The study gathered data from 320 children who completed detailed dietary and physical activity questionnaires. Correlation and regression analysis were used to study the relationships among diet, physical activity and self-reported sleep duration and screen time. Mean age of the sample group was 13.3 years; 51.8 percent of participants were male,

65 percent were Caucasian and 35 percent were Hispanic.

Inadequate sleep combined with increased electronic screen time and caffeine intake may have negative implications for adolescents' health, psychosocial well-being and academic performance.

Source: American Academy of Sleep Medicine (news : web)