

First-time moms' exhaustion caused by sleep fragmentation, rather than timing of sleep

June 10 2009

Contrary to popular belief, the timing of sleep in new mothers is preserved after giving birth. Researchers state that while postpartum mothers did experience sleep disruption and daytime consequences, their sleep/wake times remained aligned with self-reported preferred sleep/wake times.

The exception was mothers with multiple children; these women's actual awakening times were earlier than desired.

The study, authored by Megan Clegg-Kraynok, M.S., and Hawley Montgomery-Downs, PhD, of West Virginia University in Morgantown, W. Va., involved 24 women with an average age of 30.5 years and average yearly income of \$65,808. Of the participants, 92 percent were white, 96 percent were married/cohabitating, 50 percent were first-time mothers and 67 percent were breastfeeding.

According to Montgomery-Downs, postpartum moms may not suffer [sleep deprivation](#) at all. Findings of the study support the hypothesis that the exhaustion new moms experience is likely due to sleep fragmentation, rather than not sleeping enough or sleeping at the wrong times.

"We found that although our participants are quite fatigued, and their sleep at night is highly interrupted, first-time mothers of newborns go to sleep at night and awaken in the morning at the times they report are their preferred sleep and wake times," said Clegg-Kraynok. "Mothers of

newborns who have other children also fell asleep at their preferred time but awoke for the day earlier than their preferred time. We expect this is because they are awakened by the older child."

It is recommended that adults need between seven and eight hours of sleep per night in order to be fully rested.

According to the American Academy of Sleep Medicine (AASM), there are many obstacles that make obtaining a good night's sleep difficult for women.

Source: American Academy of [Sleep](#) Medicine ([news](#) : [web](#))

Citation: First-time moms' exhaustion caused by sleep fragmentation, rather than timing of sleep (2009, June 10) retrieved 4 May 2024 from <https://medicalxpress.com/news/2009-06-first-time-moms-exhaustion-fragmentation.html>

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