

Racial variations in excessive daytime sleepiness depend on measurement

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According to a research abstract that will be presented at the 23rd Annual Meeting of the Associated Professional Sleep Societies, white Americans are more likely to report experiencing excessive daytime sleepiness (EDS) more days per month than Asians, African Americans and Hispanics, but African Americans experience more severe EDS.

Results indicate that of all racial groups in the study, white participants were most likely to report feeling excessively sleepy for more than five days a month. Of the total sample, 18.4 percent of white Americans reported EDS, as compared to 12.1 percent of Chinese, 14.3 percent of African Americans and 16.8 percent of Hispanics. The study also found that according to the Epworth Sleepiness Scale (ESS), a questionnaire used to measure the frequency of dozing off during the daytime, African Americans experienced higher rates of EDS than other racial groups. Of the total study, 13 percent of African Americans, 7.9 percent of whites, 7.7 percent of Chinese and 9.3 percent of Hispanics experience daytime sleepiness.

According to lead author of the study Kelly Glaze Baron, PhD, postdoctoral fellow, at the Feinberg School of Medicine at Northwestern University in Chicago, Ill., the largest factor that explained higher EDS in African Americans was differences in physical health, including being more likely to be overweight and having higher rates of chronic diseases such as diabetes and [high blood pressure](#). African Americans also reported to sleeping for less hours than other racial groups, which also contributes to higher rates of sleepiness.

These results have public health implications. "If African Americans are less likely to report feeling overly sleepy but more likely to have pathological sleepiness, they may be less likely to get treatment for [sleep disorders](#)," said Baron.

The study included data from 5,173 men and women with an average age of 66.4 years. Of the total sample, 40.7 percent of participants were white, 11.3 percent were Chinese, 26.2 percent were African American and 21.3 percent were Hispanic. Demographic information, health behavior (exercise and smoking), physical health and medications, sleep (self reported sleep time, diagnosis with sleep disturbance symptoms), depression, social support and chronic burden were collected. EDS was measured through self report of frequency (more than five days per month) and the ESS.

Authors of the study claim that feeling overly sleepy takes into account attitudes, values and comparisons to family and friends. Findings of this study indicate that dozing off during the daytime has a stronger relationship to current health status.

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

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