

Video gaming teens sleep less: study

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Teens who play a lot of video games are likely to sleep less than the eight to nine hours a night recommended for the age group, researchers said Monday.

Speaking via teleconference from the annual meeting of the [American Psychiatric Association](#), researchers said that an analysis of data on 16,000 teens also found that youths who reported sleeping less than seven hours a night did not get enough exercise, which could also impact their health.

And not getting enough sleep is detrimental for all -- and has a particularly negative effect on teens, added Caris Fitzgerald, a psychiatry resident at the University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences who led the study,.

A poor night's sleep can bring on a slew of ill effects, including low energy, poor concentration, moodiness, a greater tendency to act on impulse and more [suicidal thoughts](#).

Yet only 10 percent of US teens get the recommended hours of shut-eye, according to the study, for which Fitzgerald and her fellow researchers analyzed the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's 2009 Youth Risk Behavior Survey.

Because teens have "accelerated demands for growth and [memory retention](#), very vital things with regard to the teen in their overall success," getting sufficient sleep is even more important for them,

Fitzgerald said.

But they also struggle to do so more than adults.

"When it comes to teens, they have a lot of factors that affect them, from an ever greater quest for independence reflected by later bedtime; to expectations from parents and peers -- like [texting](#) in the middle of the night," said Fitzgerald.

Teens' [circadian rhythms](#) don't help them in their quest for sleep either.

Their body rhythms put them on a schedule where they like to stay up late and sleep in each morning.

"But unfortunately the rest of society is not on that schedule and school is still going to start at 8:00 am," Fitzgerald said.

The researchers were unable to conclude there was a cause-effect relationship between sleep and online gaming or sport, but Fitzgerald pointed to "some evidence that reducing media exposure and increasing physical activity could increase the amount teens sleep."

The study did have one piece of good news for [teens](#): watching television does not appear to affect sleep time.

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