

Research shows sleepyheads more than grumpy

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(Medical Xpress) -- Sleepiness negatively impacts mood and impairs the integration of emotion and cognition when making moral judgments, even to the extent of planning revenge, a UALR psychology professor said in a research abstract presented at the SLEEP 2011 conference in Minneapolis, Minn.

Dr. David Mastin, associate professor of psychology in UALR's College of Arts, Humanities, and Social Sciences, said the study investigated, for the first time, the thoughts that may accompany the symptoms of sleepiness.

Research findings, presented at the the 25th Anniversary Meeting of the Associated Professional [Sleep](#) Societies LLC (APSS).

According to Mastin, the findings have practical implications for interpersonal relationships, such as in workplace interactions and performance evaluations. The study also makes an important contribution to the understanding of social decision making.

“It may be that sleepiness-related changes in social cognition will lead to a greater understanding of emotional intelligence and suggest methods of coping,” he said.

Sleepier college students are more likely to think about what others could have done to make things better. Mastin and his co-researchers said the findings show that sleepiness negatively impacts mood and

impairs the integration of emotion and cognitions when making [moral judgments](#). No prior studies had investigated how sleepiness affects social cognitions such as counterfactual thinking and displaced aggression.

“The sleepier people are, in this case college students, the more likely they are to engage in thinking about what might have been, called ‘counterfactual thinking,’ and to engage in more thoughts about displaced aggression,” Mastin said.

Previous research has suggested that counterfactual thinkers might be more motivated and analytical. However, the new study suggests that [sleepiness](#) heightens the negative side of counterfactual thinking.

“Sleepier people seem to engage in counterfactual thinking that is more dissatisfied and perhaps more selfish,” said Mastin. “It may be that the sleepier you are, the more likely your musings are to be angry thoughts about how others could have done better.”

Provided by University of Arkansas at Little Rock

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