

When you don't feel valued in a relationship, sleep suffers

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Credit: xiaphias/Wikipedia

We spend up to one-third of our life asleep, but not everyone sleeps well. For couples, it turns out how well you think your partner understands and cares for you is linked to how well you sleep. The results are published in *Social Psychological and Personality Science*.

"Our findings show that individuals with responsive partners experience

lower anxiety and arousal, which in turn improves their [sleep quality](#)," says lead author Dr. Emre Selçuk, a developmental and social psychologist at Middle East Technical University in Turkey.

One of the most important functions of sleep is to protect us against deteriorations in [physical health](#). However, this protective function of sleep can only be realized when we have high quality uninterrupted sleep, known as restorative sleep.

Restorative [sleep](#) requires feelings of safety, security, protection and absence of threats. For humans, the strongest source of feelings of safety and security is responsive social partners—whether parents in childhood or romantic partners in adulthood.

"Having responsive partners who would be available to protect and comfort us should things go wrong is the most effective way for us humans to reduce anxiety, tension, and arousal," says Selçuk.

The research supports findings from the past several years by an international collaboration of researchers including Emre Selçuk (Middle East Technical University, Turkey), Anthony Ong (Cornell University, US), Richard Slatcher and Sarah Stanton (Wayne State University, US), Gul Gunaydin (Bilkent University, Turkey), and David Almeida (Penn State, US).

Using data from the Midlife Development in the United States project, past projects from the researchers showed connections between partner responsiveness, physical health and psychological well-being over several years.

"Taken together, the corpus of evidence we obtained in recent years suggests that our best bet for a happier, healthier, and a longer life is having a responsive partner," says Selçuk.

More information: Selçuk, Emre; Stanton, Sarah; Slachter, Richard; Ong, Anthony, "Perceived Partner Responsiveness Predicts Better *Sleep* Quality through Lower Anxiety" *Social Psychological and Personality Science* Online first August 17, 2016. [DOI: 10.1177/1948550616662128](https://doi.org/10.1177/1948550616662128)

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