

More sleep may help teens with ADHD focus and organize

April 8 2019



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Teenagers with attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) may benefit from more sleep to help them focus, plan and control their emotions. The findings—the first of their kind in young people with

ADHD—will be presented today at the American Physiological Society's (APS) annual meeting at Experimental Biology 2019 in Orlando, Fla.

ADHD is one of the most common neurobehavioral disorders among children and adolescents. People with ADHD often have trouble with [executive function](#), which are skills that contribute to being able to focus, pay attention and manage time. Executive function challenges in [young people](#) may interfere with [academic performance](#), social skills and [emotional development](#). Previous research has found that a lack of sleep contributes to poorer executive functioning in typically developing adolescents, but teens with ADHD have not been studied.

Researchers from Cincinnati Children's Hospital Medical Center measured executive function in adolescent volunteers with ADHD after two separate sleep trials. The volunteers spent a week in which their sleep was restricted to six and a half hours per night, followed by a week in which they were allowed to sleep up to nine and a half hours each night. After each trial, the research team administered the Behavior Rating Inventory of Executive Function, Second Edition (BRIEF2), a widely used measure of executive function in children up to age 18. The BRIEF2 assesses executive function areas such as working memory, planning and organization, emotional control, initiation and inhibition.

The tests showed significant deficits in all of the assessed areas following the sleep-restriction week as compared to the sleep-extension week. "Increased sleep may significantly [and positively] impact academic, social and emotional functioning in adolescents with ADHD, and sleep may be an important future target for future intervention," the researchers wrote.

More information: Chaya Fershtman, a research assistant at Cincinnati Children's Hospital Medical Center, will present the poster "Sleep restriction worsens daily life executive functioning in adolescents

with ADHD" on Monday, April 8, in the Exhibit Hall-West of the Orlando County Convention Center.

Provided by American Physiological Society

Citation: More sleep may help teens with ADHD focus and organize (2019, April 8) retrieved 4 May 2024 from <https://medicalxpress.com/news/2019-04-teens-adhd-focus.html>

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