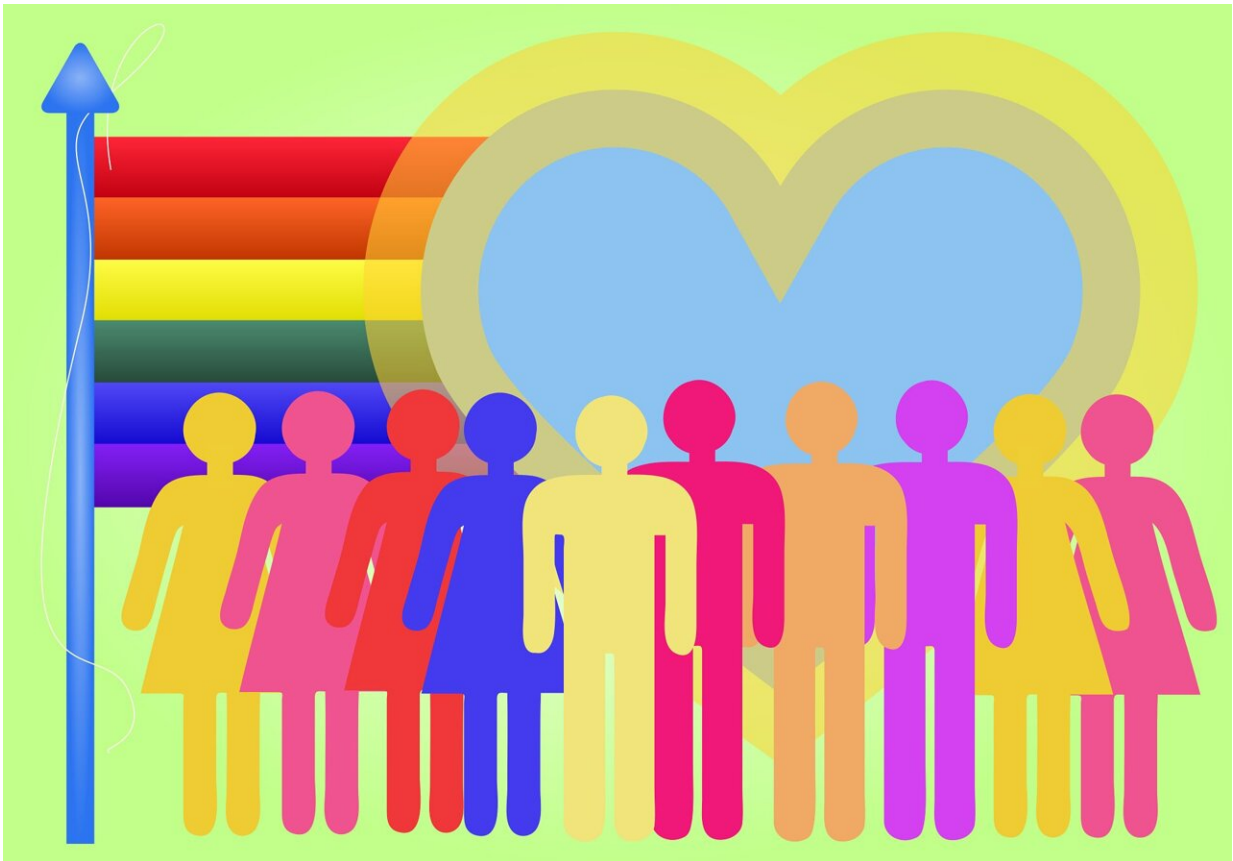


Study finds higher risk of sleep problems in gay, lesbian, and bisexual youth

March 24 2023



Credit: Pixabay/CC0 Public Domain

A new national study, published in *LGBT Health*, finds that lesbian, gay, and bisexual (LGB) youth are twice as likely to report trouble falling or staying asleep than their straight peers. Greater depression, stress, and

family conflict contribute to the sleep problems of LGB youth.

"Young people who identify as lesbian, gay, or bisexual may face discrimination and negative attitudes because of their sexual orientation. These experiences can make it harder for them to get a good night's sleep," says lead author, Jason Nagata, MD, assistant professor of pediatrics at the University of California, San Francisco. "Difficulties getting along with family, feeling sad and hopeless, and being under a lot of pressure could all make it hard for lesbian, gay, and bisexual youth to sleep well."

The researchers analyzed data from 8563 youth ages 10-14 years old who are part of the Adolescent Brain Cognitive Development Study, the largest long-term study of brain development and [child health](#) in the United States. Data were collected from 2018-2020. The youth and their parents answered questions about their [sleep habits](#) and [youth](#) were asked about their sexual orientation.

Youth who were questioning their sexuality (e.g., who replied "maybe" to being gay, lesbian, or bisexual) also had greater risk for sleep problems compared to their straight peers.

"Families should provide support by being present and encouraging [young people](#)'s exploration of their identity and development of a sense of self," said co-author, Kyle T. Ganson, Ph.D., assistant professor at the University of Toronto's Factor-Inwentash Faculty of Social Work.

"Adolescent development is a challenging time for many given the [social pressures](#) and physical, psychological, and emotional changes that occur. Understanding this process and being present to support it is crucial for positive health outcomes."

"Getting enough sleep is crucial for teenagers because it helps their body and mind grow and develop properly," Nagata says. "To sleep well,

teenagers should follow a consistent sleep routine, make sure their sleeping environment is comfortable, and avoid using electronic devices before going to bed."

More information: Jason M. Nagata et al, Sexual Orientation Disparities in Early Adolescent Sleep: Findings from the Adolescent Brain Cognitive Development Study, *LGBT Health* (2023). [DOI: 10.1089/lgbt.2022.0268](https://doi.org/10.1089/lgbt.2022.0268)

Provided by University of Toronto

Citation: Study finds higher risk of sleep problems in gay, lesbian, and bisexual youth (2023, March 24) retrieved 25 April 2024 from <https://medicalxpress.com/news/2023-03-higher-problems-gay-lesbian-bisexual.html>

<p>This document is subject to copyright. Apart from any fair dealing for the purpose of private study or research, no part may be reproduced without the written permission. The content is provided for information purposes only.</p>
--