

Teens with irregular sleep patterns found to have higher risk of school problems

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A new study to be presented at [SLEEP 2023](#) found that teens with greater variability in their sleep patterns have a higher risk for school-related problems.

Results show that the teens with greater night-to-night variability in the time they fell asleep were 42% more likely to have been suspended or expelled in the past two years, 29% more likely to have received a D or F in any course, and 26% more likely to have ever failed a course. The likelihood of suspension or expulsion was also 31% higher in teens with greater variability in [sleep duration](#).

"Variability in sleep duration and later sleep timing were associated with worse academic performance and school-related behaviors in our sample," said lead author Gina Marie Mathew, who has a doctorate in biobehavioral health and is a postdoctoral associate at Stony Brook Medicine in Stony Brook, New York. "The results highlight the importance of early, regular sleep timing and duration for optimal academic performance and school-related behavioral functioning in adolescence."

Healthy sleep requires adequate duration, appropriate timing, good quality, regularity, and the absence of sleep disturbances or disorders. The American Academy of Sleep Medicine [recommends](#) that teens should sleep 8 to 10 hours on a regular basis to promote optimal health.

The researchers collected data from more than 700 students in a sub-study of the age 15 wave of the Future of Families and Child Wellbeing Study, a national sample of diverse teens. Participants wore an actigraphy device on their wrist for about one week to track their movement and estimate their [sleep patterns](#). The [teens](#) also completed a survey to assess their grades and identify current or past problems at school. Analyses adjusted the results for demographic and household characteristics, as well as symptoms of depression and anxiety.

Mathew noted that the findings inform recommendations for pediatricians and parents about the potential impact of sleep timing and variability on school-related outcomes.

"Stabilizing [sleep](#) schedules in adolescents may be an important tool to promote functioning at school," she said.

The research abstract will be presented Tuesday, June 6, during SLEEP 2023 in Indianapolis. The paper is also published in the *SLEEP* journal.

More information: Gina Mathew et al, 0103 Greater actigraphic sleep variability and later timing are associated with more school-related problems in adolescents, *SLEEP* (2023). [DOI: 10.1093/sleep/zsad077.0103](#)

Provided by American Academy of Sleep Medicine

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