

# Sleep loss moderates link between youth impulsivity and mature-rated media usage

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A new study to be presented at the [SLEEP 2023](#) annual meeting has found that objectively measured short sleep duration partially moderates the association between impulsivity and mature-rated media usage in

early adolescents.

The research abstract was published recently in *SLEEP* and will be presented Tuesday, June 6, during SLEEP 2023 in Indianapolis.

Results show that higher [impulsivity](#) was predictive for more R-rated movie watching, and shorter [sleep](#) duration was predictive for more mature video gaming and R-rated movie watching one year later. Only 19% of participants slept more than 8 hours on average. Structural equation modeling found that sleep duration moderates the association between impulsivity and R-rated movie watching after controlling for bedtime screen use, parental monitoring, and demographic covariates.

"We found that impulsive adolescents with shorter sleep duration are more likely to be exposed to R-rated content," said lead author Linhao Zhang, who is a doctoral student in the department of human development and family science at the University of Georgia in Athens.

The American Academy of Sleep Medicine recommends that children 6 to 12 years of age should sleep 9 to 12 hours on a regular basis to promote optimal health. Teens should sleep 8 to 10 hours on a regular basis.

The three-year longitudinal study involved 2,757 early adolescents between the ages of 9 and 13 years; 50.7% were male. Their average age at the three-year follow-up was 12.9 years. Participants wore a Fitbit watch for at least seven days at the two-year follow-up to provide an objective estimate of sleep duration. They completed a questionnaire about impulsivity at the two-year follow-up, and questionnaires about R-rated movie watching and mature video gaming at both the two-year and three-year follow-up.

According to the authors, exposure to mature-rated media in youth is

associated with decreased empathy and aggressive behaviors later in life. Shorter sleep duration is associated with decreased emotional regulation and attention span, making it a potential target to improve [mental health](#), mood, and behavior in [teens](#).

"Our results show that sleep duration may be a modifiable factor for prevention and intervention efforts, especially in adolescents at higher risk for excessive mature-rated [media usage](#)," said Zhang.

The study involved a collaboration between research teams at the University of Georgia—led by Assaf Oshri, who has a doctorate in developmental psychology—and SRI International, led by postdoctoral fellow Orsolya Kiss.

**More information:** Linhao Zhang et al, 0214 Sleep Duration Moderates The Link Between Youth Impulsivity And Mature-Rated Media Usage One Year Later, *SLEEP* (2023). [DOI: 10.1093/sleep/zsad077.0214](#)

Provided by American Academy of Sleep Medicine

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