

New research shows men sleep better than women, and sleep quality improves with age

November 29 2023, by Prabhjot Sohal



Credit: CC0 Public Domain

Researchers have unveiled crucial insights into the sleep health of middle-aged and older adults in Canada, identifying social determinants that contribute to disparities in sleep satisfaction, efficiency, and

duration. The study revealed that men report sleeping better than women, and contrary to previously held beliefs, sleep actually improves with age. Socioeconomic factors like income level and homeownership also had an impact on sleep.

Previous research has shown that 40% of adults in Canada report fewer hours of sleep than the recommended seven hours. Poor sleep habits have been linked to a wide range of chronic disease outcomes, including cardiovascular conditions, cancer, neurodegenerative and autoimmune disease, as well as an increased mortality risk in aging populations. However, factors influencing sleep [health](#) have not been given much attention.

The new study, recently published in [Sleep Health](#), has shown the difference in sleep quality among Canadians from 45-85 years is significantly linked to sex, age, income, education and ethnicity.

The study, led by Western researcher Rebecca Rodrigues and supervised by Schulich School of Medicine & Dentistry professor Dr. Saverio Stranges, shows women report lower sleep satisfaction and efficiency compared to men. This disparity persisted across different sociodemographic backgrounds.

"This highlights a critical area of concern for women's health, particularly as they age," said Stranges, chair, department of epidemiology and biostatistics and professor, departments of family medicine and medicine at the Schulich School of Medicine & Dentistry. "Sleep health is a critical factor, especially among middle-aged and [older adults](#). This demographic is particularly vulnerable to the adverse effects of inadequate sleep, including [cognitive decline](#) and an increased risk of falls."

Interestingly, the study found that older adults (aged 65 and above)

reported better overall sleep health compared to Canadians from 45 to 65 years old.

"This finding challenges the notion that sleep quality invariably declines with age, suggesting that other factors, such as reduced work and a decline in family pressures in later life, might play a beneficial role," said Stranges.

Higher socioeconomic status also emerged as a significant predictor of better sleep health. Individuals with higher income levels, those who are retired and homeowners reported better sleep quality.

"It's clear that [socioeconomic factors](#) play a crucial role in determining sleep quality. This underscores the need for targeted interventions to address these inequities," said Rodrigues, the lead author of the study.

The study also shed light on racial and ethnic disparities in sleep duration, particularly among Black, East and Southeast Asian, and other mixed-race groups, who reported shorter sleep duration compared to white participants. This difference points to potential systemic issues that warrant further investigation.

The findings of this study have significant implications for public health policies in Canada. "Sleep health needs to be a priority in public health discourse, especially considering its impact on other health outcomes and quality of life among older adults," said Stranges.

The researchers asked, "Who sleeps well in Canada?" and explored 11 [social determinants](#) of three [sleep health](#) domains (satisfaction, efficiency, and duration) among middle-aged and older adults in the Canadian Longitudinal Study on Aging (CLSA). The CLSA is a national longitudinal survey of approximately 50,000 adults aged 45-85 years at baseline.

Western researchers, including Amy Jing, Kelly K. Anderson, Rea Alonzo, Piotr Wilk, Graham J. Reid, Jason Gilliland, Guangyong Zou, Kathryn Nicholson and Giuseppe Guaiana contributed to the study.

More information: Rebecca Rodrigues et al, Who sleeps well in Canada? The social determinants of sleep health among middle-aged and older adults in the Canadian Longitudinal Study on Aging, *Sleep Health* (2023). [DOI: 10.1016/j.sleh.2023.09.015](https://doi.org/10.1016/j.sleh.2023.09.015)

Provided by University of Western Ontario

Citation: New research shows men sleep better than women, and sleep quality improves with age (2023, November 29) retrieved 28 April 2024 from <https://medicalxpress.com/news/2023-11-men-women-quality-age.html>

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.