

# Lack of sleep can be linked to depression and suicidal thoughts among young people

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Too little sleep during school days and poor sleep quality can be linked to an increased risk of depression and suicidal thoughts among middle school students, shows a [study](#) conducted at the National Centre for

Suicide Research and Prevention (NASP).

The study included [middle school students](#) from 116 schools in Stockholm County. The students were asked to provide information on their bedtime and wake times, which was used to determine their [sleep duration](#) on both school days and weekends and their preference regarding the timing of sleep (chronotype). In addition to reporting on their sleep habits, they also got to answer questions about their perceived sleep quality, depressive symptoms, and [suicidal thoughts](#).

About half of the students slept fewer hours than the recommended 8-10 hours during school days. Several of the students also reported that they have a chronotype ("night owl") that is incompatible with when the school day starts. The study revealed that students who reported depressive symptoms and/or suicidal thoughts, on average, slept fewer hours per night than students who did not experience any depressive symptoms or suicidal thoughts.

"The main finding from this study is that adolescents with short sleep duration on schooldays and poor sleep quality are at higher risk of having depression and suicidal thoughts. Given that nearly half of the adolescents in this study slept less than 8 hours on weekdays, this study highlights the need for interventions that aim at promoting sleep in adolescents," says corresponding author Theresa Lemke at NASP.

Promoting sleep among [young people](#) can provide conditions for better health and affect the development of young people. It is therefore recommended that from middle school onwards, school hours are adapted to the young people's delayed sleep habits, which are currently further shortened due to today's early school start.

**More information:** Lack of sleep linked to depression and suicidal thoughts among adolescents: [news.ki.se/media/141849/download](https://news.ki.se/media/141849/download)

Provided by Karolinska Institutet

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