

Could sharing a bedroom with your pets be keeping you from getting a good night's sleep?

April 3 2024, by Brian N. Chin



Credit: Pixabay/CC0 Public Domain

Sleeping with your dog in the same room could be negatively affecting your sleep quality, according to [my team's](#) recently published research in [Scientific Reports](#).

We recruited a nationally representative sample of more than 1,500 American adults who completed questionnaires assessing their [sleep habits](#). Overall, about half of the participants reported co-sleeping with pets—defined in our study as sleeping in the same room with your pet for at least part of the night.

Next, our research team compared the sleep habits of people who did and didn't co-sleep with pets. Our analyses revealed that participants who co-slept with pets had [poorer sleep quality and more insomnia symptoms](#) than those who did not. These findings persisted even after accounting for demographic differences between these groups. When considering pet type, we found evidence for a negative effect on sleep when co-sleeping with dogs but no evidence for a negative effect on sleep when co-sleeping with cats.

Surprisingly, 93% of people in our study who co-slept with their pets believed that their pets had either a positive or neutral overall effect on their sleep. Although more research is needed, these findings could suggest that most people are unaware of the potential negative effects their pets may have on their sleep.

Why it matters

Most [pet owners](#) report that their pets have a [generally positive effect on their mental health](#). Pets can improve their owners' health in numerous ways during the day, such as by encouraging [physical activity](#), promoting a [daily routine](#) and providing love and companionship.

However, our study fills an important knowledge gap by indicating that co-sleeping with pets can affect [sleep quality](#). Good sleep is a [pillar of health and wellness](#). Even though pets may have an overall positive effect on mental health, it is possible that some of this benefit may be undermined if they are also causing you to lose sleep at night.

Although some people report that co-sleeping with their pets can provide them with a sense of [comfort or intimacy](#), it is important for people sharing a bedroom with their pets to be aware of their potential to serve as a source of nighttime noise, heat or movement that can [disrupt your ability to fall or stay asleep](#).

What still isn't known

Survey-based studies like ours are unable to prove that co-sleeping with pets causes disrupted sleep, although there is [some evidence](#) suggesting that this could be the case.

One important factor that our study did not assess was whether participants were also co-sleeping with other people like a spouse or child. Previous research suggests that [sharing a bed with other people can also affect our sleep](#) and that the [mental health](#) benefits of pet ownership could be stronger for [people with a romantic partner](#).

What's next

It probably isn't realistic for most people to just stop co-sleeping with their pets. So, what should someone do to improve their sleep if they already share a bed with their pets?

Some [expert tips](#) include choosing a mattress that is large enough for you and your pets, washing and changing your bedding regularly, and

establishing and maintaining a consistent bedtime routine with your pets. Further research is needed to identify more specific habits and routines that pet owners can adopt to ensure a good night's sleep when sharing the bedroom with their pets.

More information: Brian N. Chin et al, Co-sleeping with pets, stress, and sleep in a nationally-representative sample of United States adults, *Scientific Reports* (2024). [DOI: 10.1038/s41598-024-56055-9](https://doi.org/10.1038/s41598-024-56055-9)

This article is republished from [The Conversation](#) under a Creative Commons license. Read the [original article](#).

Provided by The Conversation

Citation: Could sharing a bedroom with your pets be keeping you from getting a good night's sleep? (2024, April 3) retrieved 2 May 2024 from <https://medicalxpress.com/news/2024-04-bedroom-pets-good-night.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.