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Effects of Sleep Deprivation

Sleep deprivation is becoming an increasing challenge among people today. Most individuals have experienced sleep deprivation at least once, and the occurrence is becoming more widespread—especially among adults. Much like food and water, sleep is a biological need that our bodies need to function properly. With that in mind, let's examine the negative effects sleep deprivation has on people and their productivity.

One of the major effects of sleep deprivation, that is oftentimes overlooked, is that it can cause accidents. Some of the world's biggest disasters have been attributed to human error due to lack of sleep. From the Chernobyl Nuclear Disaster in 1986 to the Exxon Valdez oil spill, sleep deprivation has caused the loss of lives, destruction of property, and environmental degradation. Also, sleep deprivation has been the cause of an enormous amount of road accidents—which has led to high death tolls.

Approximately 100,000 traffic accidents and 1500 crash-related deaths can be attributed to fatigue among drivers (Peri, 1-3). These numbers are shocking considering that most of the victims are young adults of 25 years or younger. In fact, nearly 20 percent of all road accidents in the U.S. are due to sleep deprivation among drivers (Blass, Vargo and Wisniewska, 28). Also, work-related accidents are often caused by sleep deprivation. Workers who have frequent work accidents cite lack of sleep as their primary reason for such mishaps.

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Productivity is also affected by lack of sleep. Sleep deprivation leads to poor performance in the workplace and in schools. Children need 10-12 hours of sleep per day, while adults need 7-8 hours minimum (Blass, Vargo and Wisniewska, 28). Lack of sleep among school-going children can result in bad grades, while adults may underperform at work. The body needs sleep to enhance thinking and learning, and a lack of sleep or minimal sleep can inhibit these cognitive processes in numerous ways.

People with sleep deprivation are unable to reason correctly, pay attention, concentrate, and stay alert (Peri, 1-3). In fact, researchers compare carrying out simple activities while fatigued to doing so while under the influence of alcohol. Activities like studying, driving, and working may be difficult for sleep-deprived people to execute properly. Moreover, sleep deprivation causes poor memory retention, making people quickly forget or take a long time to process simple information. Sleep is paramount for the mind to store memories.

Sleep deprivation over an extended period causes depression. In fact, most people suffering from depression and anxiety sleep for six hours or less per night (Peri, 1-3). Insomnia (a common sleep disorder) is generally the first symptom of depression, and the majority of those who suffer from it become depressed at some point. Insomnia and depression are intertwined in the sense that insomnia can make its victims suffer from depression, and those who are depressed tend to lack sleep. However, as much as insomnia is attributed to depression, treating the disorder can aid to cure depressed victims.

People who do not get enough sleep are at risk of many problems. They are prone to accidents, be it the road or in work-related accidents. Their performance is also affected, making it difficult for them to correctly reason, make decisions, and/or concentrate. This minimizes their productivity in school and in the workplace. Finally, sleep-deprived people are more likely to suffer from depression than individuals who are not sleep deprived. Sleep is vital for human health and performance, therefore

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making it essential to ensure that you get enough sleep every night.

Works Cited

Blass, Laurie, Mari Vargo, and Ingrid Wisniewska. 21St Century Reading. 2016.
Print. Peri, Camille. "*10 Things To Hate About Sleep Loss*". WebMD (2014): 1-3. Print.

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