

## **Late-night teens 'face greater depression risk'**

Teenagers need at least nine hours sleep a night, say experts. Going to bed earlier protects teenagers against depression and suicidal thoughts, New York research suggests. Of 15,500 12 to 18-year-olds studied, those who went to bed after midnight were 24% more likely to have depression than those who went before 2200. And those who slept fewer than five hours a night had a 71% higher risk of depression than those who slept eight hours, the journal *Sleep* reports.

The researchers from Columbia University Medical Center in New York looked at data from 15,500 teenagers collected in the 1990s. One in 15 of those studied were found to have depression. As well as the higher risk of depression, those who were set a bedtime by their parents of after midnight were 20% more likely to think about suicide than those whose bedtime was 2200 or earlier. Those who had less than five hours sleep a night were thought to have a 48% higher risk of suicidal thoughts compared with those who had eight hours of sleep. Depression and suicidal thoughts were also more likely in girls, older teenagers and in those who had a lower self-perception of how much parents care about them. Most of the parents of the adolescents in the study set a bedtime of 2200 or earlier. A quarter set a bedtime of midnight or later.

Teenagers who reported they "usually get enough sleep" were 65% less likely to be depressed.

Study leader Dr. James Gangwisch said although it was possible that youngsters with depression struggle to sleep, the fact that parental set bedtimes were linked with depression suggests that a lack of sleep is somehow underpinning the development of the condition. He said a lack of sleep could affect emotional brain responses and lead to moodiness that hindered the ability to cope with daily stresses. This moodiness could affect judgment, concentration and impulse control. "Adequate quality sleep could therefore be a preventative measure against depression and a treatment for depression," he added.

Sarah Brennan, chief executive at the mental health charity YoungMinds, said: "Enough sleep, good food and regular exercise are all essential to stay emotionally healthy."

The full article can be found at:

<http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/health/8435955.stm>