

Sleep quality and health

A recent poll reveals that when it comes to sweet dreams, Canadians are not getting enough, especially women. This new study, commissioned by Sunbeam and conducted by Harris/Decima market research firm, found that only 1 in 10 Canadian adults sleeps soundly on a regular basis. For the other 90 percent of the population, the three biggest 'sleep stealers' affecting Canadians include stress (57 percent), uncomfortable room or temperature (51 percent) and insomnia (29 percent).

It is found that an overwhelming majority of women experience sleep disturbances more strongly than men, most notably in the three main 'sleep stealer' categories: stress (62 vs. 53 percent), uncomfortable temperature (61 vs. 43 percent) and insomnia (35 vs. 25 percent).

'Extended periods of sleep disruption or poor sleep quality can often lead to impaired daytime functioning and depressed mood,' said Dr. Eva Libman, associate director of the behavioural psychotherapy and research unit at the Jewish General Hospital in Montreal. 'These sleep problems often can be addressed by following good 'sleep hygiene' practices, for example: employing a relaxing and consistent pre-bedtime routine, disrupting intrusive thoughts at bedtime by reading or listening to a book on tape, avoiding going to bed hungry or thirsty, and maintaining a comfortable bedroom environment,' said Libman.

Regionally, Ontarians reported finding that stress keeps them awake most frequently (60 percent), followed closely by Quebecers (59 percent), while Maritimers are the least likely to lose sleep because of stress (50 percent). Maritimers also are the least likely to suffer from insomnia (25 percent), while Quebecers are the most likely (34 percent).

'The fact that so many Canadians are not getting the full benefit of a good night sleep speaks to the size of the market need. Finding strategies to sleep more soundly should be a personal health priority for those who are experiencing this problem,' said Nelson Pascua, vice president of Harris/Decima. 'There's no question that quality of sleep affects quality of life. We spend approximately one-third of our day sleeping, and science has proven a good night's rest is essential to our well-being,' said Nadège Kéléchian, director of marketing for Jarden Consumer Solutions.

The study also identified other common sleep disturbances for Canadians including noises from outside (27 percent), being awakened by a partner (26 percent), uncomfortable beds (11 percent), and being awakened by children (10 percent).

Clearly, the quality of our sleep often reflects on our mood when we interact with family members, coworkers and others. So, next time when you talk to an impatient, jumpy and agitated person, you can bet that s/he must have some kind of sleep problems.