

CHAT ROOM



LEN McCULLOCH

Sleep disorders plague 1 in 3

One in three people will have sleep disorders. Researchers say that the right amount of sleep is simply the amount we need to feel well rested and alert. A person who lives to be 60 will have spent 20 years, on average, sleeping.

Insomnia is the most common sleep disorder and is characterized by needing more than a half hour to fall asleep, early-morning or frequent awakenings during the night. About 80 percent of this type of disorder arises from bad habits, stress and psychological factors.

Narcolepsy, however, affects less than 1 percent of the population. It's a relatively rare, but chronic disorder that produces sudden sleep attacks at odd times such as during a conversation or a meal. Quick medical attention should be sought.

Sleep apnea may affect as much as 4 percent of the population and up to 25 percent of people over 65. In apnea, the sleeper stops breathing for a few seconds, wakes up briefly to gasp for air and immediately falls back to sleep. This can happen hundreds of times nightly. Medical attention should be sought.

Two other conditions should not be neglected. One is myoclonic jerks, sometimes referred to as "the jimmy leg." Here there are episodes of repetitive muscle twitches in the limbs that recur throughout the night.

Teeth grinding (bruxism) can also reduce the quality of sleep and may cause a painful jaw or headache. Sometimes this can be corrected by the use of a dental mouth guard.

Sleep debt

Having a chronic sleep disorder will result in "sleep debt." This comes from the accumulation of time spent not sleeping when the body is supposed to be asleep. Much daytime grogginess, especially while driving or operating machinery, is dangerous and results from the brain being deprived of sleep.

Years ago, Lafayette Clinic had a sleep research lab, and I spent six months studying there. Researchers use a polygraph, which can detect brain-wave activity, eye motion, muscle tension, respiration, heart rate, sweat and body temperature. Measurements of normal sleepers have provided a standard against which to compare the records of people complaining of sleep problems. Certain stages have been identified, and a percentage of time spent in each stage is required for restorative sleep.

One important stage is rapid eye movement (REM). This is when we dream. Even people who insist they never dream, if awakened when the polygraph shows they're entering REM, will immediately report a dream. We dream about every 90 minutes throughout the night, for about 10 minutes. Those that say they never dream would be correct to say "I never remember my dreams."

Chronic alcohol consumption has been shown to drastically reduce the amount of REM sleep. It may be that alcoholic delirium tremors - hallucinations that occur during alcohol detoxification, are actually rebound REM that had been suppressed and find expression in wakeful hallucinations.

Function of sleep

Researchers don't know for sure what the function of sleep is. There may be many. This would be logical since we spend a third of our time sleeping.

One might think the purpose of sleep is to relieve fatigue. However, astronauts in weightlessness of space have no muscle fatigue yet still require measured amounts of sleep. Also, people in bed 24 hours a day don't sleep substantially more than the rest of us.

A theory that makes the most sense has to do with circadian rhythms such as the ebb and flow of the tide, the sun setting and rising, day versus night, sleepiness versus alertness. The establishment of rhythms is important biologically and psychologically.

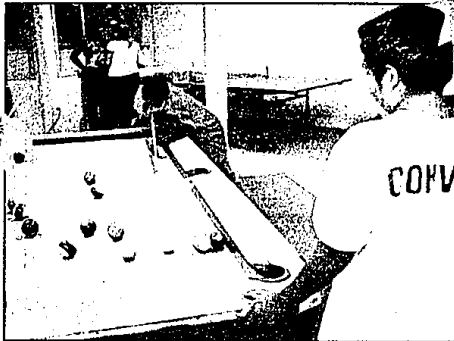
Remedies for sleep problems can include cognitive, behavioral, psychological techniques and medical-biological interventions. Cognitive techniques can include examining and changing

AFTER SCHOOL

middle school

Farmington Hills Youth and Family Services

PROGRAM



Shooting pool: Zeyad Jabra lines up his shot. Teju Rudraraju waits his turn.

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The Farmington Hills Youth and Family Services after-school middle school program racks up visitors even during summer vacation.

The program was created over five years ago to provide a safe after-school environment for 11 to 15 year olds who would otherwise be returning to empty homes. For the past four summers, it also has offered special programming. This past summer, total number of vis-

at four sites, the ice arena logged 650 visits by 115 kids; the Costick Activities Center had 100 youths per day; Warner Middle School had 680 visits by 110 kids and the YMCA logged 700 visits by 100 kids.

Lipa said the Sept. 11 terrorist attacks impacted the figures this fall, with parents wanting to keep kids closer to home.

"The numbers are down because of the tragedy," he said. But by the end of September, the numbers were starting to rise again.



Twirling: Christie Scott and Molly Tyza take a spin on the ice, a perk of the program at the ice arena.



Relaxing: Even with all of the after school activities available sometimes a guy would sooner stretch out with a bag of popcorn and a good video. Tim Gilbert watches "Jurassic Park: The Lost World".

its to a youth drop-in center and field trips was almost 2,000. From July 1 to Sept. 1, 394 new middle schoolers signed up for the program, which is free for participants. A majority - 299 - are sixth-graders. Fifty-seven seventh-graders and 38 eighth-graders also registered.

"The number goes up gradually each year," said Todd Lipa, program director of Farmington Hills Youth and Family Services, which oversees the after-school program.

In summer, kids went horse-back riding, to the movies, the zoo, water parks, miniature golf courses and visited the Farmington Founders Festival. At the summer drop-in center operating at the Farmington Hills Ice Arena, kids played baseball, soccer, basketball, or skated.

"Half (kids) is generally incoming sixth-graders," said Lipa, who has been with the program since its inception. "If you look at the schools, there's not a lot of sports at that level."

For the first three weeks of the fall term, with centers operating

"We have a great relationship with the middle schools," Lipa added. "As principals see which kids are not on our list but could benefit from our programs, they share that information."

Students attending the after-school program are transported from their middle school to one of the four centers by school bus. A parent or guardian must pick them up from the center by 5:30 p.m. Games, sports, socializing, and tutoring are some of the opportunities available in the centers. Ping pong, foosball, video games, board games, air and floor hockey and swimming are also offered, depending on location.

Mildred Taylor is principal of Warner Middle School, which operates the after-school program on Tuesdays and Thursdays.

"It gives kids who'd otherwise go to an empty house somewhere to be," she said. "And there's the tutorial aspect. As a school it gives us a chance to give extra help where it's needed. Those who don't need help can finish their homework. It's a critical time in a

student's life. There's so many temptations. Parents can feel assured there's structure here, a safe environment supervised by adults. It's very valuable."

The program has been cited by state juvenile coordinators as a national model. And last July, Farmington Hills Mayor Nancy Bates and David Kinchen, a former active program participant, testified before the U.S. House Appropriations subcommittee in Washington, D.C. First funded by a federal Title V grant, their testimony was welcomed by House members seeking to maintain national Title V funding. The Farmington program's \$384,000 federal grant for three years included a \$200,000 match from the city.

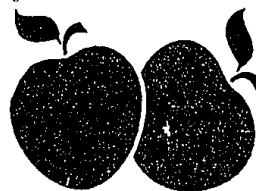
Today, the after-school program's \$260,000 annual budget is made up of funding from the Farmington Hills/Farmington Community Foundation, a park millage, the city of Farmington, and contributions from service clubs, corporations and parents.

Bates has long been a sup-

porter of the program as a positive and less costly alternative to law enforcement programs for troubled youth. And studies have shown that kids in the middle school age group are most at risk to experiment with risky activities in the unsupervised after-school hours.

Lipa said, "In Wayne County, it costs \$20,000 to incarcerate a juvenile, it's more costly than for an adult. (Juveniles) need 24-hour care, schooling, additional buildings. Sheriff Robert Ficano is 100 percent behind our program."

For more information about the middle school after-school program, call the Farmington Hills youth and family services program at 473-1841.



Volunteer: Students have the opportunity to volunteer some of their time. Shantinique Turner, Mari Donovan and Yash Mittal assemble information packets for the local Chamber of Commerce. In the background, counselor Rosalee Rudzki coordinates the work.