



Sleep

Preview Points

- Sleep disturbances or challenges occur occasionally for most people.
- Chronic insomnia or regular sleep disturbances may arise for one in six.
- The amount of sleep varies for people.
- Challenges relating to sleep may relate to difficulty of falling asleep, difficulty staying asleep, or poor quality of sleep. These sleep challenges may come in various combinations.
- Sufficient sleep is necessary for human functioning.

Contents

Sleep is said to occur in five stages:

Stage 1: The transition from wakefulness to sleep

Stage 2: A light sleep

Stage 3: "Delta sleep," the deepest stages of sleep

Stage 4: "Delta sleep," the deepest stages of sleep

Stage 5: REM or "rapid eye movement" sleep

People tend to progress from Stages 1 to 4, then back to Stage 2, and then "to REM sleep in about ninety minutes. The typical sleeper will go through four to six of these cycles per night...We obtain most of our deep sleep during the first half of the night and most of our dream sleep during the second half. It is normal to wake up several times during the night and not remember this the next morning" (Benson & Stuart, 1992, pp. 291 – 292).

It helps to be aware of one's sleep patterns and to reflect on what the effects of sleep loss may be. People have differing needs for the amount of sleep that they may need.

Ways to enhance sleep are to establish regular patterns of sleep. It helps to avoid alcohol, caffeine or food consumption a few hours before rest. Also, avoid exercise before trying to get restful for Stage 1 sleep. The bedroom should not be used for non-relaxing activities.

People may develop relaxation and pre-sleep activities like playing music or watching television to relax. Others may find eye covers and ear plugs helpful for a state of relaxation.

Having sufficient sleep is an important aspect of a healthy and balanced life. Setting aside time is a helpful way to make healthy sleep an integral part of one's life.

Concluding Points

- Sufficient sleep is necessary for proper functioning.
- People need to be aware of their sleep patterns and needs.
- It helps to have relaxation strategies in place to relax.

References

Benson, H. & Stuart, E.M. (1992). *The Wellness Book: The Comprehensive Guide to Maintaining Health and Treating Stress-Related Illness*. New York: Birch Lane Press. 289 – 303.