

Insomnia in Children

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Sleep is very important for a growing child, where neonates need as many as 17 hours of sleep in their first week of life which drops off to average of 12 hours by the time the child is aged 4 years. In some cases, the children may be affected by the inability to fall asleep, a condition that is referred to as insomnia. This paper examines some of the problems that may cause sleeping problems in children, how sleep may affect development, and some of the measures that can be taken by parents to ensure that children are getting enough sleep.

What are some of the causes of sleeping problems in children?

One factor that can cause sleeping problems in children is stress. Children just like adults may be affected by stress which may be triggered by different situations such as marital problems among parents, being bullied at school, and undergoing traumatizing incidences among others. Lack of sleep in children may also be triggered by side effects of certain medications such as anticonvulsants. Environmental factors such as noise or excess temperatures can also trigger lack of sleep in children. Presence of appliances such as television in the children's room may provide distraction that may limit the ability of the children to sleep. In other instances, the use of stimulants or caffeine may also lead to lack of sleep in children (Cleveland clinic, 2013).

How can lack of sleep affect development?

The highest levels of the hormones that are responsible for development in a child are released when one is sleeping. Therefore, if a child lacks sleep, there is a decrease in the level of the growth hormone that is released to the blood stream. This reduces the rate of growth and development in a child. Lack of sleep also has an effect is reducing the level of development of the brain in a child. This has an effect in reducing cognitive ability in children that are associated

with sleeping problems. Lack of sleep in children is also associated with signs such as depression, hyperactivity, and irritability. These signs usually result in the deprivation of the health of a child. Reduced health affects the level of development in the child since the body does not work under the right conditions (Papalia & Martorell, 2015).

What are measures parents can take to ensure their children are getting enough sleep?

One of the measures that should be taken to ensure that a child gets enough sleep is by prioritizing sleep. This calls for the need to create a time schedule that will be followed where one can begin by identifying the time the child needs to wake up. One can then subtract the amount of time that one is required to sleep in order to determine the appropriate time for bedtime. In some cases, where the child is mature, there is a need to have conversations with the child on cutting back some activities that they may prioritize such as watching TV. Another strategy that can help is starting bedtime earlier. This ensures that a child is ready for sleep and that they get to sleep as earliest as possible. Another strategy that can help is shutting off lights and other screens that may distract the child (Kids health, 2017). For instance, a child may have a TV in their room or an iPad where the only way to ensure that a child sleeps is switching off these devices. Lastly, parents can introduce foods that promote sleep. This involves cutting foods that may prevent the children from sleeping such as substances containing caffeine.

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