

Sleep theories - insomnia

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There are five stages in the sleep cycle, each one vital to ensure a proper night's sleep. The first stage is the beginning of the sleep cycle, during which the brain produces very slow brain waves. This stage lasts only five to ten minutes; many people do not feel that they were actually sleep when they are woken up during this stage. The second stage is when the body temperature decreases and the rate of the heart slows down. The brain begins to produce quick, patterned brain waves. This stages lasts roughly twenty minutes. The third stage of sleep is when the brain waves become deep and slow, putting the person in a place between light sleep and deep sleep. The fourth stage involves a deep sleep that lasts for thirty minutes and the brain waves continue to slow down. The fifth and final stage of sleep involves dreaming and rapid eye movement, or REM. This stage consists of eye movement and an increase in brain activity. While the brain increases in activity, the muscles become relaxed. Stages two and three are often repeated before the person experiences REM sleep (Moorcroft, 1993).

There are a variety of functions of sleep, with one of the most important being restoration. It has been proven that sleep helps to heal wounds and speed up the healing process when someone is sick. When someone lacks sleep, they are causing negative affects to the immune system, so sleep is vital to staying healthy. Another function is to help grow and rejuvenate the immune, nervous and muscular systems. This can be obtained through non-REM sleep. REM sleep presents another function, which involves keeping the person mentally healthy. Without proper and constant REM sleep, the person can experience behavioral, sleep and brain development problems. Memory processing is another vital function of sleep. Experiments have shown that a <https://assignbuster.com/sleep-theories-insomnia/>

properly functioning memory is often related to good sleeping habits and patterns. The less sleep that a person gets, the weaker their memory is and the less that they are able to store and remember.

Insomnia is a very common sleeping disorder, one in which the person has difficulty in either falling asleep or staying asleep. A person suffering from insomnia often wakes up feeling unrefreshed, feeling as though they did not sleep at all. Insomnia is often caused by school-, work-, or health-related stress. Anxiety, depression and medications are other causes; poor sleeping habits, too much caffeinated products or eating too much right before bed have also proven to cause insomnia. Symptoms of insomnia include trouble falling and staying asleep, waking up often in the night or waking up too early, difficulty in paying attention or focusing, which can lead to an increased amount of accidents or errors (Lyman, 2010). When a person is really affected by insomnia, they often are unable to function properly throughout the day, and their job, schoolwork, or social lives begin to fail and become difficult. While there is no real cure for insomnia, patients are treated with sleeping medications, therapy, and special education designed to help them understand what is keeping them awake and fixing that problem, as well as improving their sleeping habits.

I believe that I do suffer from insomnia on occasion, as I am sure that other students do as well. When I become stressed out about my schoolwork or about situations with friends, I find it difficult to sleep. I lay in bed for hours on end, thinking about the situations. Even when I am ready to actually fall asleep, my brain decides to stay up and continue thinking on the situations. My insomnia is easily caused by stress and perhaps a rather unhealthy amount of caffeine and food right before I go to bed. I know the causes of my

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insomnia, so I am able to go about fixing it and improve my sleeping habits.

References

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Moorcroft, W. H. (1993). *Sleep, dreaming and sleep disorders*. Lanham, MD: University Press of America.