

MEDIA RELEASE

What has Sleep got to do with Mental Health? Everything!

Friday, 6 October 2017: 40% of Australians aren't getting enough sleep each night. Researchers from Neuroscience Research Australia (NeuRA) have highlighted the importance of sleep for mental health and wellbeing as Mental Health Week begins.

To become a healthier nation, Australians can all do their part by getting enough sleep each night. Research Scientist, Dr Hanna Hensen, from the NeuRA Sleep and Breathing Lab said sleep influences the function of key organs in the body and plays an important role in our 24hr biological rhythm.

"It is during sleep several brain processes take place, memory consolidation occurs, and neural connections are strengthened," said Dr Hensen.

"Sleep is also an important time for processing information we have accumulated across the day; and inadequate or poor sleep can have a direct impact on mental health effecting depression, anxiety and emotional instability.

"A good night sleep can improve mental health, general wellbeing, and boost workplace productivity."

Principle Research Scientist at NeuRA, Associate Professor Danny Eckert, said the financial cost of inadequate sleep in Australia was estimated to be \$66.3billion in 2016-2017. The personal cost of inadequate sleep is higher still.

"Poor sleep leads to poor concentration and every day in Australia someone dies from a sleep related vehicle or industrial accident," said Assoc Prof Eckert.

"Sleep directly impacts mental health and in the long term inadequate sleep increases the risk of developing depression, anxiety disorder, and burnt out."

Good sleep starts with good habits which can be introduced at home. Dr Hensen suggests a regular sleep routine and bed time, not using your smart phone one hour before going to sleep to avoid blue light stimulation, bringing the lights down in your environment, and avoiding caffeine after 4 pm.

All Australian's are encouraged to start a new Sleep Routine to ensure they support their mental health and wellbeing.

Visit www.neurataalks.org to hear more from Dr Hanna Hensen during Mental Health Week.

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