

What are the effects of sleep deprivation on people's health and productivity?

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A study conducted by researchers at the University of Lugano and the University of Pittsburgh (U.S.A.) reveals interesting implications. Fabrizio Mazzonna, professor of health economics, tells us more.

Today's society pushes more and more towards a 24/7 pattern with a compression of time devoted to sleep and an alteration of our biological rhythms. Small but constant restrictions in time devoted to sleep may – according to this research – have negative effects on health and productivity.

Listen to the interview (in the box to the right) with Professor Fabrizio Mazzonna, conducted in Trento on March 23, 2017 on the occasion of his seminar at FBK – IRVAPP (Research Institute for the Evaluation of public policies) Center entitled “Sunset Time and the Economic Effects of Social Jetlag. Evidence from US Time Zone Borders “.Abstract: This study uses a spatial regression discontinuity design to identify the effects of the misalignment between social and biological time Resulting from the conflict between social constructs such as time zones and work schedules and the timing of natural light, which affects our physiological processes. Exploiting the discontinuity in the timing of natural light at a time-zone boundary, we find that an extra hour of natural light in the evening Reduces sleep duration by an average of 19 minutes and Increases the likelihood of reporting insufficient sleep. Natural light affects individual bedtime, but social schedules are not responsive to social schedules. Using data drawn from multiple sources, we find that the timing of natural light has significant effects on health outcomes (eg, obesity, diabetes, cardiovascular diseases, and pregnancy outcomes), and annual income. We provide an estimate of the productivity losses associated with these effects.Interview done by M. Lucianer c/o FBK-IRVAPP, Trento (March 2107)

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