

Night work could damage your health

23rd January, 2014



A new study suggests working shifts at night can be damaging to one's health. In particular, it increases the risk of several cancers, diabetes, mental illnesses, and various heart

diseases. Researchers from the Sleep Research Centre at the U.K.'s University of Surrey discovered that many genes in the body needed to follow a regular 24-hour cycle, during which the body sleeps at night. If this cycle is broken, up to 1,500 genes could get damaged, eventually resulting in potentially life-threatening diseases. Professor Derk-Jan Dijk said: "The study has important implications because we now need to discover why these rhythms exist and think about the consequences of that."

The human body has around 24,000 genes. Many of these switch off if the body does not follow a regular sleeping pattern. This can cause parts of the immune system to become less efficient, making us more susceptible to illnesses. Study co-author Dr Simon Archer said: "Over 97 per cent of rhythmic genes become out-of-sync with mistimed sleep, which really explains why we feel so bad during jet lag or if we have to work irregular shifts." Dr Dijk said that despite the results of the research, it would be difficult for people to change their lifestyles. He explained it was difficult for society to function without people working night shifts, but said people needed to understand the dangers and "mitigate the impact".

Sources: *Daily Mail / Daily Telegraph*

Writing

Governments should stop people working night shifts. Discuss.

Chat

Talk about these words from the article.

study / night shifts / diabetes / sleep / genes / life-threatening / diseases / rhythms / human body / pattern / immune system / out-of-sync / jet lag / research / society

True / False

- Night shifts decrease the risk of getting diabetes. T / F
- The research is from a British university. T / F
- As many as 1,500 genes could be damaged by irregular sleep patterns. T / F
- A professor found out why sleeping patterns that affect genes exist. T / F
- The human body has about 240,000 genes. T / F
- Irregular sleeping patterns can weaken the immune system. T / F
- Irregular sleep affects 97% of all our genes that depend on rhythms. T / F
- A doctor said it was easy for society to function without night workers. T / F

Synonym Match

- | | |
|-----------------|------------------|
| 1. study | a. repercussions |
| 2. damaging | b. operate |
| 3. resulting in | c. turn |
| 4. cycle | d. harmful |
| 5. consequences | e. prone |
| 6. switch | f. report |
| 7. susceptible | g. lessen |
| 8. despite | h. rhythm |
| 9. function | i. in spite of |
| 10. mitigate | j. leading to |

Discussion – Student A

- What do you think of working at night?
- Have you ever worked or studied all night?
- Why do some people prefer working or studying at night?
- Are there any advantages to working at night?
- How would you describe your sleeping patterns?
- Are you a good sleeper?
- How are you if you do not get enough sleep?
- Do you ever think about the effects on health of a lack of sleep?

Phrase Match

- | | |
|-----------------------------------|--------------------------|
| 1. it increases the | a. broken |
| 2. follow a regular | b. of-sync |
| 3. this cycle is | c. the consequences |
| 4. resulting in potentially life- | d. system |
| 5. think about | e. 24-hour cycle |
| 6. the immune | f. "mitigate the impact" |
| 7. making us more susceptible | g. risk |
| 8. genes become out- | h. lag |
| 9. jet | i. threatening diseases |
| 10. understand the dangers and | j. to illnesses |

Discussion – Student B

- Have you ever felt really bad because of a lack of sleep?
- Will you try to sleep more regularly from now?
- Have you ever had jet lag? What do you do for it?
- Would it be easy for you to change your lifestyle to work nights?
- What would change in society if no one worked nights?
- Should people get paid danger money for working nights?
- Would you accept a job that involved night shifts?
- What questions would you like to ask a sleep expert?

Spelling

- In lirptauarc...
- riuasov heart diseases
- many nsege in the body
- potentially life-enairnettgh diseases
- The study has important olnpitsmiaci
- think about the ucseoqcnsen
- the mnmeui system
- become less cetefinif
- making us more secuiestbpl to illnesses
- work grruareli shifts
- difficult for yiceots
- tieamgti the impact

Answers – Synonym Match

1. f	2. d	3. j	4. h	5. a
6. c	7. e	8. i	9. b	10. g

Role Play

Role A – Midnight

You think midnight is the best time to work. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them things that are wrong with their times. Also, tell the others which is the worst of these (and why): lunch time, 6am or 6pm.

Role B – Lunch time

You think lunch time is the best time to work. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them things that are wrong with their times. Also, tell the others which is the worst of these (and why): midnight, 6am or 6pm.

Role C – 6am

You think 6am is the best time to work. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them things that are wrong with their times. Also, tell the others which is the worst of these (and why): lunch time, midnight or 6pm.

Role D – 6pm

You think 6pm is the best time to work. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them things that are wrong with their times. Also, tell the others which is the worst of these (and why): lunch time, 6am or midnight.

Speaking - Sleep

Rank these and share your rankings with your partner. Put the ones that interrupt your sleep most at the top. Change partners often and share your rankings.

- | | |
|-----------------|---------------------------|
| • light | • feeling too hot / cold |
| • stress | • bad dreams / nightmares |
| • noise outside | • noises in the house |
| • snoring | • thinking too much |

Answers – True False

a	F	b	T	c	T	d	F	e	F	f	T	g	T	h	F
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Answers to Phrase Match and Spelling are in the text.