Study Says Less than Half of Canadians Sleep Well at Night



The National Sleep Foundation recently released the results of a study on the sleep habits of people in six countries. Here are some highlights from the 2013 International Bedroom Poll, which is based on interviews of individuals from Canada, Germany, Japan, Mexico, the UK and the US.

Profile of Canadian Sleepers

According to the poll of Canadians:

- Average time slept on work nights: 7 hours, 3 minutes
- Average amount of sleep needed to function best: 7 hours, 22 minutes
- 53% said they get less sleep than needed on workdays
- 43% said they get a good night's sleep almost every night
- 70% said their schedule/routine allows for adequate sleep
- Of Canadians who didn't get enough sleep, 66% said it impacted their work productivity and 64% their health
- 19% said they considered work-related stress every night while lying in bed preparing to sleep.

Comparison of Countries

Respondents from all countries sleep roughly 45 minutes longer on non-workdays than workdays.

Those from the US and Japan sleep significantly less on workdays than individuals from Canada, Mexico and the UK. That finding may explain why respondents from the US and Japan tend to nap more than respondents from other countries.

Although over half of respondents from all countries said they get less sleep than needed on workdays, about a third of the respondents from Canada and the UK reported getting *more* sleep than they needed.

Sleep Tips

The Foundation provided this advice for getting a good night's sleep:

- Exercise regularly. Vigorous exercise is best, but even light exercise is better than no activity. Exercise at any time of day'but not at the expense of your sleep.
- Go to sleep and wake at the same time every day. Avoid spending more time in bed than needed.
- Use your bedroom only for sleep to strengthen the association between your bed and sleep. It may help to remove work materials, computers and televisions from your bedroom.
- Save your worries for the daytime. If concerns come to mind, write them down so you can address those issues the next day.
- If you can't sleep, go into another room and do something relaxing until you feel tired.
- If you're experiencing excessive daytime sleepiness, snoring or 'stop breathing' episodes in your sleep, contact your health care professional for a sleep apnea screening.

Workers who aren't getting enough sleep can pose a safety hazard on the job. That's why you should learn about how to implement a fatigue risk management system, including a Model Fatigue Management Policy.

In addition, read about the hazards of drowsy driving and how employers can be held liable if an exhausted worker gets into a traffic accident after his shift. And here's a Model Notice on recognizing the signs of fatigue you can give to workers.

And because workers who do shift work are especially vulnerable to sleep issues, go to Safety Smart for a safety talk on adjusting to such work. Not a Safety Smart member' Sign up for a free trial.