

[IMAGE]

Is Your Child's Depression Being Caused by Poor Sleep?

By Editorial Staff

Any of a host of reasons can be the culprit when your child displays symptoms of depression, many of which involve social interaction and self-esteem: weight, perceived appearance, peer problems / bullying, etc. That's not the exhaustive list, of course; just the most common; less common (although still far too prevalent) reasons include being a victim of or witness to a traumatic event, including sexual or emotional abuse.

And then there's the issue of poor sleep, which we know can contribute to numerous health problems (and may play a role in depression) in adults, both short- and long-term. Evidence points to poor sleep as a potential cause of depressive symptoms in teens, adolescents and children as well. A review of studies, published in *JAMA Network Open*, has found that children who experience "disturbed sleep" (insomnia or sleep disruptions such as waking up during the night, etc.) are more likely to display symptoms of depression.

poor sleep - Copyright © Stock Photo / Register Mark The research review was based on 22 studies that met applicable criteria and found a relationship between disturbed sleep and depression in three age groups, one of which included children as young as age 5. Sleep as a potential contributor to depressive symptoms was confirmed in children (ages 5-9) and adolescents (ages 10-19); as well as a young adult group (20-24).

If your child is suffering from poor sleep, investigate the potential cause. Are they staying up late, scrolling through social media on their smartphone? Are they eating fatty food right before bedtime? Are they stressed out about their academics, social network or other school-related variable? Or is it something more insidious, such as a trauma they may not have shared? Regardless, take poor sleep and depressive symptoms seriously, particularly since as this study suggests, the two are related.

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