**What a Lack of Sleep Can Do to Your Body and Mind**

All of us have received advice to “take a good rest” at least once in our lives. Probably, this is also one of the most neglected pieces of advice a person may give to another. With the ever-increasing pace of life, especially in big cities, sufficient rest–and sleep, in particular–is gradually becoming more of a luxury than a basic need that should be addressed and satisfied. Everyone knows how sleep is important: health experts, psychologists, self-help books, and other authoritative sources keep talking about the importance of having good sleep–and still exhaustion and fatigue remain one of the biggest problems in a number of developed countries.

Perhaps, this is just not enough to make people pay attention to the problem. Supposedly, it would be more convincing to learn about the negative effects of sleep deprivation, poor quality sleep, or just constantly ignoring one’s need for restoration and rest. This essay discusses some of the crippling (and sometimes surprising) effects a simple lack of sleep can do to a person’s mind and body.

First of all, if you ever wondered how someone with schizophrenia or other severe mental disease feels, a sleepless night could get you closer to this condition. **As researchers from the University of Bonn and King’s College London discovered, upon missing a night of sleep, a psychologically-healthy person may experience symptoms typical for some forms of schizophrenia.** During the course of the experiment, which led the scientists to such a conclusion, a group of people was offered to first have a night of normal sleep, and then to stay awake by conversations, games, and physical activities. After this, test subjects were to undergo prepulse inhibition measurements. Prepulse is a psychological mechanism helping the brain to filter incoming sensory information: with its help, our minds distinguish between important and unimportant stimuli coming from the environment. After just one sleepless night, this function turned out to be inhibited significantly. Test subjects reported altered bodily sensations, distorted perception, and weird ideas: for instance, some of them believed they could read thoughts. They also became more sensitive to light and loud noises (Universitat Bonn). After having a good rest, perception returns back to normal, but it takes time to return all psychological and physical functions back to its usual state. In the case of prolonged sleep deprivation, some consequences may be irreversible.

Do you enjoy feeling depressed? Or do you like mood swings, when periods of euphoria quickly change to severe blues? If the answer is yes, then sleep deprivation is for you. **Numerous research studies conducted in different sleep laboratories showed that people who did not have enough sleep, or have been deprived of it for certain periods of time, tend to be more irritable and less able to control their negative emotions.** They are also more likely to react negatively to something they do not like, even if the trigger is not significant. This is not to mention the increased likeliness of developing depression. Besides, the lack of sleep inhibits friendliness and empathy, and impairs one’s ability to stay in a positive mood (Psychology Today). In addition, if you have such mental conditions as obsessive-compulsive disorder or chronic depression, their symptoms may become more acute as well. In any case, to avoid prolonged periods of negative mood, you might want to sleep well regularly.

As if it was not enough, sleepless nights can affect your body in a negative way as well. There have been numerous research studies proving that people having problems with falling or staying asleep also had other health issues as well. In particular, sleepless nights can lead to increased risks of heart attacks and failures, strokes, diabetes, and increased blood pressure. Poor sleep can also kill your sex drive, regardless of your gender. In particular, both men and women who suffer from sleep deprivation reported lowered interest in sex and decreased libido in general. In particular, poor sleep caused by the apnea syndrome–a widespread health condition among men–was also connected to abnormally low levels of testosterone secretion during nighttime (WebMD).

Among other peculiar and unpleasant consequences of depriving yourself of sleep is the suppression of your immune system, weight gain, memory issues, and problems with concentration. This is not to mention the risk of getting into an accident because of decreased attentiveness and alertness (Healthline).

Overall, there is a number of good reasons why you would not want to stay up the next time you feel like working or studying at night. In particular, you may experience altered perception, distortion of cognitive and memory functions, and the inability to concentrate and think straight. Also, your mood will be down, and it will become harder for you to control your negative emotions, such as anger or fear. As if this was not enough, your body suffers as well. In particular, people who regularly deprive themselves of sleep, develop higher risks of heart diseases and diabetes, and report lowered sex drive and libido. So, in general, there is probably nothing that would compensate you for a night spent without sleep.