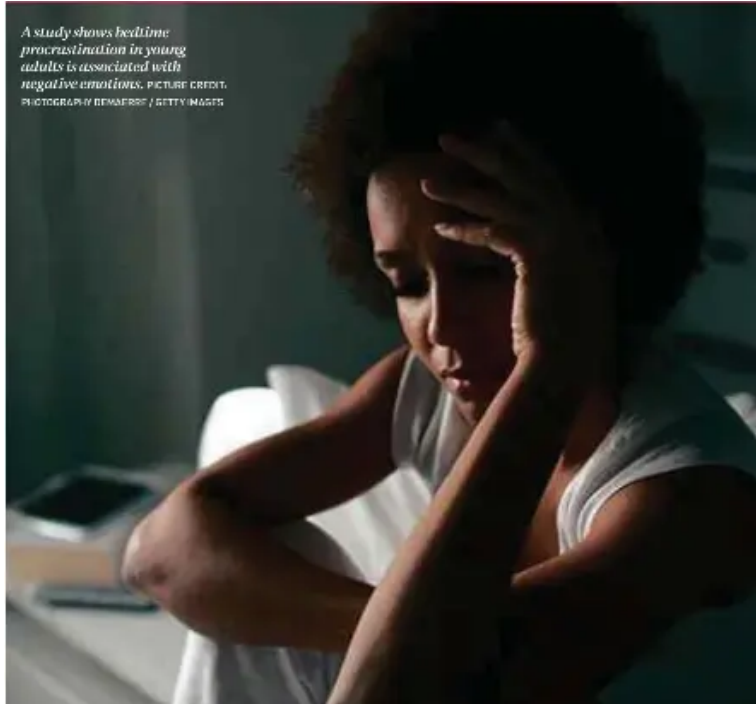


- Sleep / Chronic fatigue

Why putting off bedtime may be something serious

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RECENT research in the United States suggests that habitually putting off bedtime may be associated with negative emotions such as anxiety and depression. The study focused on people living in the United States with an average age of 24.



We all have those moments of extreme lethargy when we wake up and all we want to do is stay snuggled up in bed for hours. Gen Z has even turned it into a social media trend known as “bed rotting”.

But if getting out of bed becomes a daily struggle or is associated with chronic fatigue, this difficulty can become worrying and, in some cases, even a sign of depression. But endlessly putting off going to bed could be a cause for concern too, especially among young people, according to a new study published in the journal ‘Sleep’.

The study looked at a group of 390 young adults with an average age of 24. Participants were asked to keep a sleep diary for 14 days and fill out several questionnaires to better understand their emotions and determine their chronotype, a term used to describe whether someone is more of a “morning person” or a “night owl”. The aim was to assess their procrastination at bedtime, ie, delaying going to sleep without this being related to external obligations or constraints (such as working late or being away from home).

Although delaying going to bed can be explained by other factors, such as poor time management or a lack of self-discipline, the survey results suggest that it may also be associated with recurrent anxiety or even depressive tendencies. The responses of volunteers with a strong tendency to procrastinate at bedtime reflect a higher level of neuroticism (a tendency to experience negative emotions), as well as lower levels of conscientiousness and extraversion.

“Our study demonstrated that individuals who habitually procrastinate their bedtime were actually less likely to report seeking out exciting, engaging, or enjoyable activities,” says lead author Steven Carlson, a doctoral candidate in the Psychology Department at University of Utah in Salt Lake City, quoted in a news release. In light of these findings, the researcher suggests exploring emotional health as a potential target for interventions aimed at addressing the widespread problem of bedtime procrastination. “Given the ubiquity of this behaviour, and its impact on sleep health, we hope to extend this research to determine whether reducing negative emotions prior to bedtime can be an effective treatment for bedtime procrastination,” the researcher says.