Sleepless in Chennai: The Consequences of Increasing Sleep Among the Urban Poor

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Evidence to Action 2019
Reason to be concerned about poor sleep especially in developing countries, yet relatively little known about economic impacts.
Experts recommend (night sleep): 7-9 hours

Objectively measured in our study: 5.6 hours

Objectively measured in US: 6.25 - 6.5 hours

Percent napping on any given day in our population: 43%
Our Experiment

Introduce and test interventions to improve night-time and day-time sleep, and measure the effects of these interventions on productivity, decision making, health, and wellbeing.
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452 Participants

Low-income, previously-unemployed individuals recruited to work full-time in our office in Chennai, India doing data-entry work.
Our Experiment

452 Participants

Control

Sleep Devices + Encouragement

Sleep Devices + Encouragement + Incentives
Our Experiment

452 Participants

Control
- Nap
- No Nap

Sleep Devices + Encouragement
- Nap
- No Nap

Sleep Devices + Encouragement + Incentives
- Nap
- No Nap
Our interventions improve both day-time and night-time sleep

**Control sleep:** 5.6 hours

**Devices + Encouragement:** + 21 mins

**Devices + Incentives:** + 35 mins

**Nap sleep:** 16 mins
No discernable positive impacts of night-sleep
Naps impact a range of outcomes