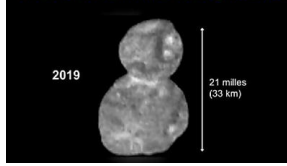




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Night owls risk dying younger, should sleep in: Study



A survey of more than 430,000 people in Britain found that night owls had a 10-per cent higher risk of dying in the 6½-year study period than "larks". PHOTO: GETTY IMAGES/ISTOCKPHOTO

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PARIS (AFP) - People who stay up late and have to drag themselves out of bed are more likely to die younger than those who rise and set with the sun, researchers said on Thursday (April 12).

A survey of more than 430,000 people in Britain found that night owls had a 10 per cent higher

risk of dying in the 6½-year study period than "larks".


"This is a public health issue that can no longer be ignored," said study co-author Malcolm van Schantz of the University of Surrey - and argued that "night types" should be allowed to start and finish work later in the day.

"Night owls trying to live in a morning-lark world may (suffer) health consequences," said fellow author Kristen Knutson of the Northwestern University in Chicago.

The duo gathered information on nearly half-a-million people aged 38-73 from a public database.

The participants had defined themselves as either "definitely a morning person" (27 per cent), "more a morning person than evening person" (35 per cent), "more an evening than a morning person" (28 per cent), or "definitely an evening person" (9 per cent).

They also listed their weight, smoking habits, and socioeconomic status.



ST

Night owls risk dying younger.

Night owls risk dying younger
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Deaths in the group - just over 10,500 in total - were documented for 6½ years.



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The night owl group, the team found, had a 10-per cent higher risk of dying than those in the extreme early-morning group.

People in the late-night group were more likely to suffer from psychological disorders, diabetes, and stomach and breathing troubles, and slept fewer hours per night.

They were also more likely to smoke, drink alcohol and coffee, and use illegal drugs.

The higher risk may be because "people who are up late have an internal biological clock that doesn't match their external environment," Knutson said.

"It could be psychological stress, eating at the wrong time for the body, not exercising enough, not sleeping enough, being awake at night by yourself, maybe drug or alcohol use."

The research duo urged special treatment for night owls.

"If you can recognise these (types) are, in part, genetically determined and not just a character flaw, jobs and work hours could have more flexibility for owls," Knutson said.

"They shouldn't be forced to get up for an 8am shift."

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