M5 Assignment: States of Consciousness

Kyler Suess

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Schoolcraft College

Shellie Jones

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Through reading various articles on the National Sleep Foundation’s website, I discovered various sleep facts that can guide an individual to achieve higher quality sleep. Firstly, performing vigorous exercise promotes healthy sleep by regulating the body's circadian rhythm. The National Sleep Foundation did a poll and found that many Americans are not performing some kind of moderate exercise during the week. Second, the introduction of blue light produced by electronics tends to keep individuals awake. This is due to the body's circadian rhythm, and how it responds to light. Since your brain is recognizing there is light, your brain reduces the amount of melatonin released causing difficulties in falling asleep. The National Sleep Foundation found that light exposure two hours before bedtime can have adverse effects on sleep and sleep quality.

Furthermore, the National Sleep Foundation found that driving while sleep-deprived is equivalent to driving with a blood alcohol content of 0.05% after 17-19 hours of no sleep. Further time spent awake increased that measurement to 0.1% BAC. Their observations included decreased reaction time, hand-eye coordination, and narcolepsy. Finally, the necessary amount of sleep is dependent on an individual's age. Newborns required the most amount of sleep, 14 and 17 hours, decreasing to 12 to 15 hours in ages 4-11 months. That number will drop by about 5 to 6 hours by the time adulthood is reached. The reason for this cannot be explained, as the current knowledge on sleep does not have any confident explanation for the need to sleep.

A chart of people's sleep duration

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