

Trouble sleeping? Your children may experience the same problems, study suggests

Researchers have long known that severe sleep disorders, such as sleep apnea, are hereditary.

But what about common sleep problems, such as disturbed or restless sleep, in the general population? This has never been studied before.

“We know that lifestyle, such as exercise, diet and smoking, means a lot. Age also means a lot. But that doesn’t explain everything,” says Ane Johannessen.

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The study looks at two generations and how they sleep. Nearly 6,000 parents who were on average 54 years old, and one of their randomly selected adult children, who were aged 30 on average, were asked a number of questions about sleep.

The questions were:

- How often do you have trouble falling asleep?
- How many times during the week do you wake up several times during the night?
- How often do you wake up early in the morning?
- Do you snore?
- Are you plagued by feeling very tired during the day?

“When we compare the two generations, we see that there is clearly a higher risk of children having the same type of sleep disorder as their parents,” says Johannessen.

...

“We’ve now found this pattern. And we suspect that genetic mechanisms are behind it. The next step is to see if we find any genetic mechanisms,” [says Johannessen.]

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