

HEALTH

Poll: Most Americans Sleep Poorly

(AP) - Getting a good night's sleep is hard for many adults and that often means poorer health, lower productivity on the job, more danger on the roads and a less vibrant sex life.

"By 3 to 4 in the afternoon, I'm starting to feel brain-drained and I need that caffeine to pick me back up again," said Becky Mcerien, 50, of Philadelphia.

She gets about 6.5 hours of sleep a night - slightly less than the adult average of 6.9 hours reported by the National Sleep Foundation.

Many experts say adults need a minimum of seven to nine hours of sleep a night.

A poll for the foundation, released Tuesday, indicates that three-quarters of adults say they frequently have a sleep problem, such as waking during the night or snoring.

Most people ignore the problem and few think they actually have one. Only half of those polled were able to say they slept well on most nights.

"I get what I need to function," said Guillermo Sardina, 55, of Hamilton, N.J., who averages six or seven hours a night. "I sleep through the night. I'm a sound sleeper. ... I don't even remember my dreams."

One-fourth of adults say sleep problems have some impact on their daily lives.

Richard Gelula, the foundation's CEO, said there's a link between sleep and quality of life.

"People who sleep well, in general, are happier and healthier," he said. "But when sleep is poor or inadequate, people feel tired or fatigued, their social and intimate relationships suffer, work productivity is negatively affected, and they make our roads more dangerous by driving while sleepy and less alert."

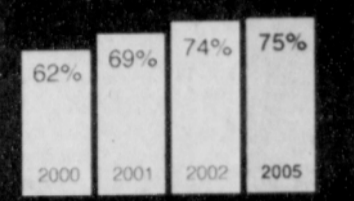
Symptoms of a sleep problem include difficulty falling asleep, waking a lot during the night, waking up too early and not being able to get back to sleep, waking up feeling unrefreshed, snoring, unpleasant feelings in the legs or pauses in breathing.

Darwin McCallian, 51, of Burke,

Not a good night's sleep

An increasing number of adults are experiencing at least some difficulty sleeping, according to a recent survey.

Percentage of respondents reporting any symptom of a sleep problem*



* a few nights a week or more, based on a survey of 1,506 adults with a margin of sampling error of ±2.5 percentage points

SOURCE: National Sleep Foundation

Va., wakes up at 4 a.m. so he can get a head start on his work day and says he sometimes gets drowsy during his commute into Washington.

"When I sleep in a little bit longer, it makes me a safer driver," said McCallian, who gets six to eight hours of sleep a night.

It's not just how much sleep a person gets, but the quality of sleep that matters, the report said.

Some of the nation's sleep habits can be attributed to an always-on-the-go society, said Chris Drake, senior scientist at the Henry Ford Hospital Sleep Center in Detroit and co-chairman of the 2005 poll task force.

"In an increasing 24-hour society, people are staying up much later," he said. "They can go to a 24-hour pharmacy or supermarket. They can do anything at any time of the night and day. That can impact on people's decisions to stay up later watching TV, doing work, being on the Internet."

Mary Cuffee, 64, of Washington, says she stays up watching TV and has a stressful job. For her, seven hours of sleep aren't enough. She says she needs at least 10.

The study found:

- Six in 10 adult motorists said they have driven while drowsy in the past year; 4 percent reported that they have had an accident or near-accident because they were too tired or actually fell asleep while driving.

- Three-fourths said their partner has a sleep problem, and the most common is snoring.

On the net at National Sleep Foundation: www.sleepfoundation.org

Experts Urge Routine HIV Tests for All

(AP) - Urging a major shift in U.S. policy, some health experts are recommending that virtually all Americans be tested routinely for the AIDS virus, much as they are for cancer and other diseases.

Since the early years of the AIDS epidemic in the 1980s, the government has recommended screening only in big cities, where AIDS rates are high, and among members of high-risk groups, such as gay men and drug addicts.

But two large, federally funded studies found that the cost of routinely testing and treating nearly all adults would be outweighed by a reduction in new infections and the opportunity to start patients on drug cocktails early, when they work best.

"Given the availability of effective therapy and preventive measures, it is possible to improve care and perhaps influence the course of the epidemic through wide-



Nurse Scherri Rucker-Graves sets up an HIV test in a Atlantic City mobile van exam room. (AP photo)

spread, effective and cost-effective screening," Dr. Samuel A. Bozzette wrote in an editorial accompanying the studies.

Nationwide, about 40,000 new HIV infections occur each year. An

estimated 950,000 people are infected with the virus, but about 280,000 of them don't know it.

Anti-Vaccine Sentiment Plagues Nigeria

(AP) - Accusations by Islamic preachers that vaccines are part of an American anti-Islamic plot are threatening efforts to combat a measles epidemic that has killed hundreds of Nigerian children, health workers say.

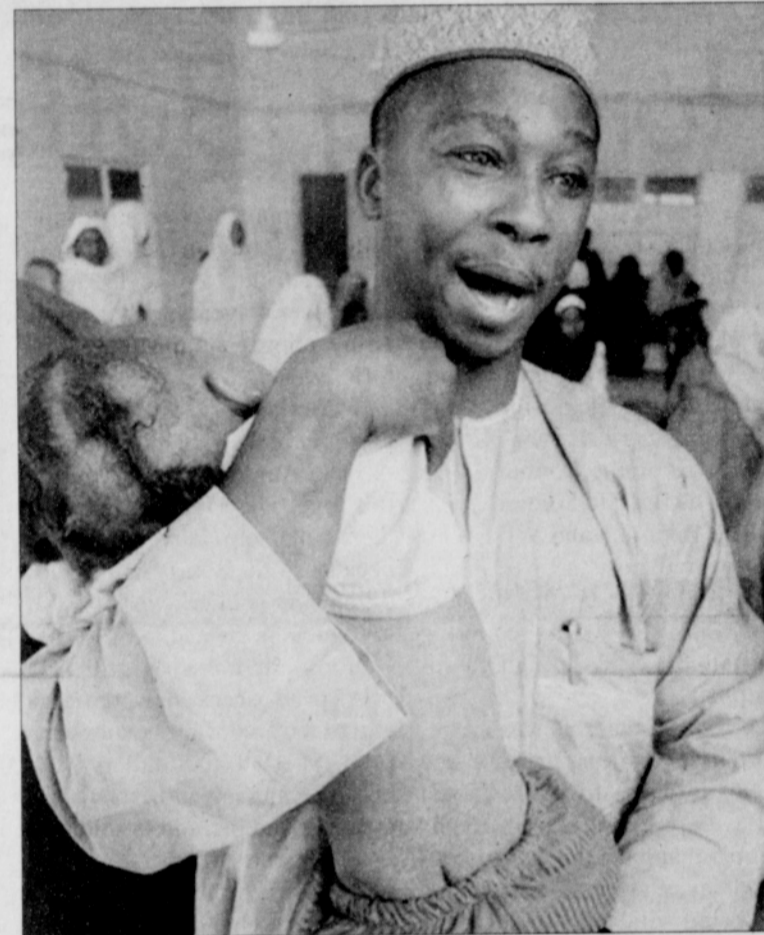
Government officials play down the anti-vaccine sentiment, but all the measles deaths have been in Nigeria's north, where authorities had to suspend polio immunizations last year after hard-line clerics fanned similar fears of that vaccine.

Nigeria, whose 130 million people make it Africa's most populous nation, has recorded 20,859 measles cases so far this year. At least 589 victims have died, most of them children younger than 5 and all in the north, the Nigerian Red Cross and the U.N. World Health Organization say.

Southern Nigeria, which is mainly Christian, had only 253 measles cases, and no deaths.

Health services are much better in the south. But the anti-vaccination sentiment in the north, evident from interviews with parents, seems to be a factor.

"Since the polio controversy, I have not presented any of my children for immunization because my



Mohamed Nasir carries his one year-old child Rukaiyya Nasir and shows the skin problem on her as a result of suffering from measles as he and others wait to see the doctor at the Kano state government hospital in Kano, Nigeria, Monday March 21. (AP Photo)

hit state, with nearly 7,000 cases, including 155 deaths, since Jan. 1.

In 2003, Islamic clerics claimed the United States was using polio vaccine to sterilize Muslims or contaminate them with the AIDS virus. They ordered a boycott in messages disseminated from mosques, in radio broadcasts and by door-to-door campaigning.

The U.S. Embassy called the claims "absolutely ridiculous."

But three powerful state governors in the north joined the polio boycott, and it dragged on 11 months before authorities persuaded the governors in July to accept vaccine bought from the predominantly Muslim nation of Indonesia.

By then the number of polio cases in Nigeria had risen fivefold, and the crippling disease had spread to nine other African countries where it previously had been eradicated.

Now there are fears the anti-vaccine sentiment could also affect the measles outbreak.

Last year, WHO recorded 24,363 Nigerian measles cases from January to September. That is not many more than this year, and officials say some states have not yet reported cases for March, which is generally the peak of measles season.

A big surge would be a blow to WHO, which had hoped to bring measles under control this year. Across Africa, measles deaths fell from 873,000 in 1999 to just more than 500,000 - or half the global total - in 2003, according to the U.N. health agency's most recent statistics.

Some clerics have added the measles vaccine to their campaign against immunizations.

husband said I should not," said Ramatou Mohammed, who was at Abdullahi Wase Hospital seeking treatment for her baby, Miriam, for a measles rash.

"I heard on the radio that the vaccine was contaminated. I still don't trust any vaccine," the 28-year-old mother of four added.

Her views were echoed by others in the waiting room at the hospital in Kano, which is in the worst-

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Women's Health Celebrity doctor to attend Portland health conference

Oregon Health and Science University welcomes Dr. Judith Reichman as the keynote speaker for the 10th Annual Women's Health Conference.

Reichman is best selling author of "I'm Too Young To Get Old and I'm Not in The Mood." She is also the physician correspondent for NBC's "Today" show.

There will be over 10 different information sessions ranging from topics of breast cancer to fighting fatigue and night sweats.

Many facets of health will be represented, including a session with Kay Toran, president of Volunteers of America, who will present "Spreading Your Wings to Soar." The goal is to teach methods of success through passion, self-confidence and goal setting.

Specifically to our community "Eat 5-A-Day," improving African-American health with fruits and vegetables. Bill Beamer, media director for the African-



Dr. Judith Reichman

American Health Coalition, will facilitate this presentation.

This full-day conference is will be held on Saturday, April 16 from 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. at the Oregon Convention Center. Tickets are \$35, which includes a vegetarian lunch and free samples of health care products.