



DR. ARI SHECHTER

Assistant professor of Medical Sciences, Medical Center, Columbia University

- PhD in Neuroscience from McGill University
- Completed the postdoctoral research scholarship at the New York Obesity Nutrition Research Unit, Columbia University
- Conducts laboratory-based experiments, observational studies, and clinical interventions to understand the biobehavioral pathways by which sleep and circadian rhythms affect the health

THREE ELEMENTS DETERMINE SLEEP QUALITY

According to sleep surveys, Singapore is the world's most sleep-deprived country. Dr. Ari Shechter from the United States commented that most people in Singapore feel sleepy during the daytime, which is terrible. He analyzes three key elements to quality sleep. The first is "the depth of sleep" - is it deep and restorative? This may be related to slow-wave sleep. Then there's "the duration" - do we sleep for a long time? Experts recommend that sleeping seven to eight hours a night is ideal. Finally, "the continuity". These three focus points define good sleep quality, and any problems arising from any of these can lead to health problems.

Dr. Ari Shechter remarked that short sleep duration can lead to a decrease in sleep quality and make it difficult for the body to regulate glucose. People who get less sleep have an increased risk of developing type 2 diabetes by about 30% compared to people who get enough sleep.

Besides that, sleep can also affect memory, cognitive capability, attention, and the ability to remember and learn. Lacking sleep can also cause cognitive impairment, i.e. problems managing hand-eye coordination tasks, which is equivalent to legal drunk driving and is very similar to having the 0.10% alcohol concentration in the blood in the body. In short, he says that good sleep protects the cognitive abilities of the young and middle-aged people from Alzheimer's disease and mental illness.

We often hear about "beauty sleep", which is a valid statement. Adequate sleep will reduce the signs of skin aging on the face and help maintain a glowing, healthy look. If sustained, it can promote the proliferation of skin collagen and reduce wrinkles, and even improve healthy hair. In short, as long as one sleeps well, one can successfully fight aging.

