



Improving Anxiety Through Better Sleep: The Effects of Sleep Hygiene Education in University Students

Chen Liying*

Department of Psychiatry, Zhejiang University, Hangzhou, China

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Periods of high academic pressure, such as examinations or major deadlines, often bring increased anxiety. These stressors are intensified by irregular sleep schedules, late-night studying and prolonged screen exposure, which are common habits in young adults. Poor sleep quality is one of the most consistent and modifiable factors contributing to emotional distress. When sleep becomes disrupted or insufficient, it affects concentration, memory and emotional regulation, leading to heightened anxiety. Addressing sleep behavior through simple, practical interventions can significantly reduce stress and support better mental balance. A four-week program promoting better sleep hygiene demonstrated that consistent sleep routines and reduced screen exposure before bed can improve rest and emotional stability. The program emphasized three essential areas: Maintaining regular sleep and wake times, avoiding screens and electronic devices before bed and adopting calming bedtime routines. They received weekly reminders, brief educational resources and simple checklists to help them practice healthy sleep habits. The approach required no medical treatment or professional supervision, focusing instead on self-directed behavior change.

By the end of the four weeks, individuals who actively followed the recommendations reported longer, more restful sleep and a noticeable reduction in anxiety. Many also described feeling more alert and focused during the day, suggesting that improved sleep directly contributed to better emotional regulation and cognitive performance. Those who previously had inconsistent sleep schedules experienced the most positive changes, finding comfort in the predictability and rhythm of regular rest. Establishing structure provided a sense of control during a time often marked by uncertainty, especially in competitive academic environments. Even modest improvements in sleep appeared to create meaningful shifts in mental well-being. The emotional benefits stemmed from better regulation of mood and a reduction in the physiological effects of fatigue. Poor sleep tends to heighten irritability, amplify stress responses and lower

frustration tolerance. In contrast, adequate rest supports balanced hormone function, sharper thinking and a calmer emotional state. By improving sleep consistency, the program indirectly enhanced the ability to manage academic pressure without becoming overwhelmed. Another valuable aspect of the approach was its practicality. The recommendations required minimal time and no special equipment, making them easy to adopt within busy schedules. The emphasis on awareness and small behavioral adjustments helped participants take ownership of their well-being. Regular reminders about setting boundaries for screen time and creating a relaxing pre-sleep environment encouraged mindfulness and discipline in daily routines. Such low-cost, easily replicable strategies can be particularly useful in any setting where stress and irregular habits are common.

The success of this program demonstrates that emotional health can often be strengthened through small, consistent lifestyle improvements rather than complex interventions. Better sleep is not only a physical necessity but also a foundation for mental stability. When individuals rest adequately, they process information more efficiently, maintain greater patience and handle pressure more effectively. These benefits extend beyond exam periods or stressful phases, influencing long-term academic and emotional outcomes. While results were encouraging, certain limitations must be acknowledged. The reliance on self-reported data may introduce subjective bias and the short duration makes it difficult to assess lasting effects. Future efforts might examine whether continued adherence to sleep hygiene principles sustains reduced anxiety over time. Integrating digital tools for tracking sleep patterns or introducing peer accountability could further enhance engagement and long-term success.

Despite these limitations, the findings reinforce the powerful connection between rest and resilience. Emotional balance often begins with physical regulation and consistent sleep is one of the simplest yet most neglected forms of self-care. Encouraging awareness around healthy rest habits may serve as a cornerstone for broader mental wellness initiatives. Promoting consistent

Correspondence to: Chen Liying, Department of Psychiatry, Zhejiang University, Hangzhou, China, E-mail: hannah.cooper@sydneyuni.au

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bedtimes, minimizing exposure to screens before sleep and developing evening relaxation routines can have lasting benefits. Such practices not only improve sleep quality but also help manage anxiety, boost focus and restore a sense of calm during demanding periods. As young adults continue to face increasing

academic and personal challenges, the importance of structured rest cannot be overstated. Establishing these small but impactful habits fosters a healthier balance between productivity and well-being, paving the way for a more resilient and focused generation.