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SINGAPORE

57% of lower-Primary kids not getting enough sleep: Survey

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By Haikal Latiff
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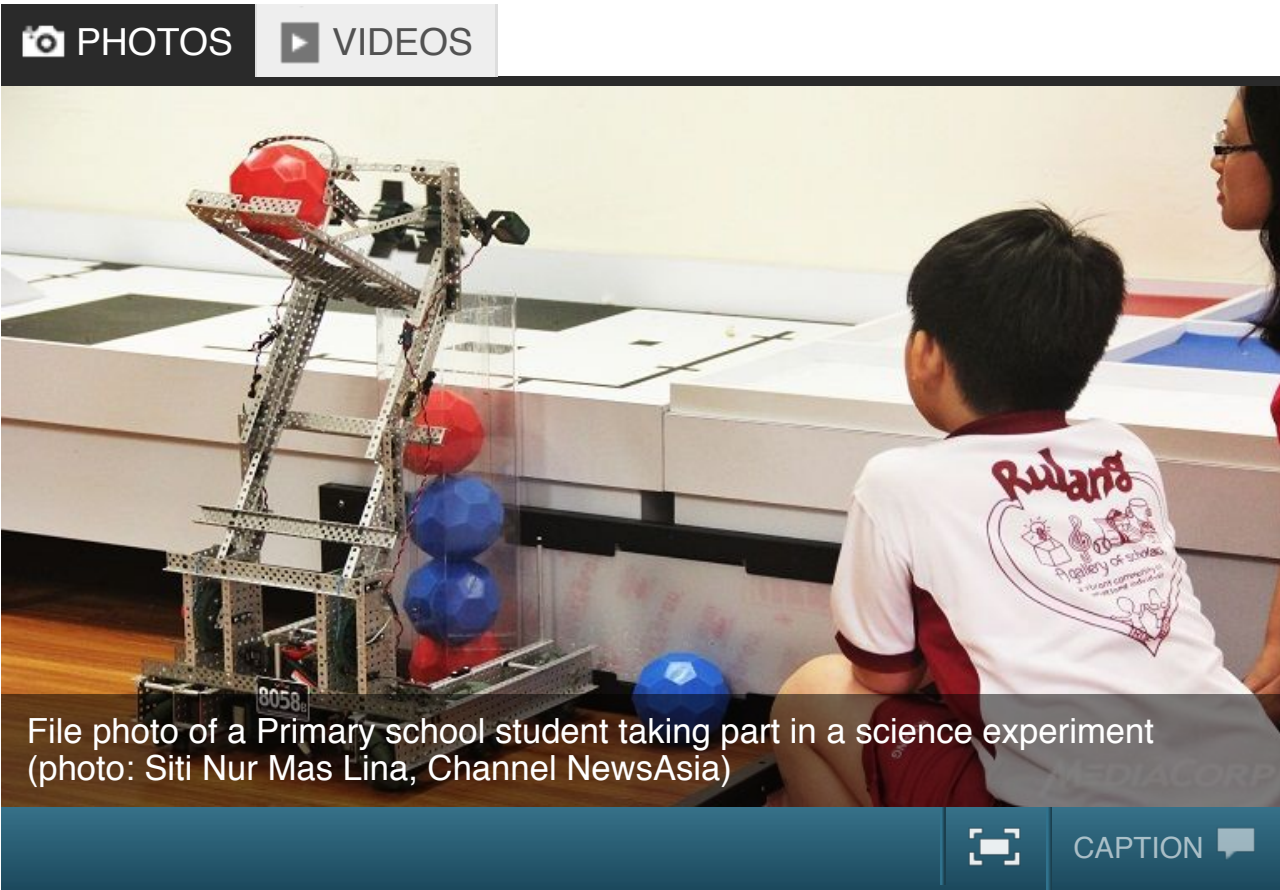
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The survey, which was done in collaboration with National University Hospital, showed that most of children get 8 hours of sleep on a school night, when they should ideally clock in 9 to 10 hours a day.



SINGAPORE: About 57 per cent of children from lower Primary lack enough sleep, according to a survey conducted by students from Nanyang Technological University.

The survey, which was done in collaboration with National University Hospital, also showed that most of these children get 8 hours of sleep on a school night, when they should ideally clock in 9 to 10 hours a day.

More than 300 respondents - comprising parents with children aged between six and nine years old - were asked about their perceptions of sleep, their children's sleep hygiene and their own, between November and December last year.

Of those surveyed, 37 per cent of children were found not to have a regular bedtime, while 35 per cent of them do not have a regular bedtime routine. As a result, they tend to feel sleepy or become overactive during the day. Some also fall asleep when commuting on public transport or while watching TV.

For these children, most spend their time using digital devices before they sleep. 75 per cent of children watch television, 60 per cent use smartphones, while 30 per cent use computers an hour before bedtime. Such practices increase arousal and negatively

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affect the quality of a child's sleep.

These practices may have been taken on as a result of their own parents' pre-bedtime behaviour. Most parents said they spend their time watching TV an hour before bedtime, while 4 in 5 admitted to using smartphones for social media.

Dr Michael Lim, consultant at Department of Pediatrics, National University Hospital said: "If you are sleepy in the daytime, you are not going to be able to function optimally, in terms of using your brain power."

He also added that there is evidence to show that the ability to think in a higher order, to make decisions, or to use higher cognition skills can be affected when children are sleep deprived. "You are also not able to retain things as well as you should," he said.

Nine in 10 parents also admitted that they do not feel that their child has a sleep problem. Inadequate sleep hygiene is often the result of a lack of parental supervision of bedtime and sleep behaviours. It is also caused by insufficient knowledge about sleep needs and appropriate sleep behaviours.

Parents should look out for signs of sleep deprivation in their children, such as a lack of concentration, drop in school performance, irritability and frustration at the slightest provocation as well as spontaneously falling asleep when sitting down or watching TV.

The survey is part of a public information campaign called The Pillow Police.

- CNA/ac/xk

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