

Two Steps Forward, One Step Back

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The scene: a dental sleep medicine professional is preparing a presentation on the multiple negative consequences of insufficient sleep; she takes a break and turns on the television. Her face registers shock and dismay while watching an advertisement for a Microsoft tablet.

Why? Watch and draw your own conclusion: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Yjs2uiKPo2c>.

There are considerable efforts being made to inform the public as to the benefits of sufficient sleep and the likely consequences of inadequate sleep. The National Health Sleep Awareness Project (NHSAP) is one example of these efforts. The NHSAP is a multidisciplinary, multiyear project of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention awarded to the American Academy of Sleep Medicine. The primary aim of the NHSAP is to reduce the burden of poor sleep and sleep disorders in the population, because there is growing evidence of the negative consequences of inadequate sleep.¹

The associations that inadequate sleep has with poor health and diminished well-being include²:

- Physical health: particularly cardiovascular disease
- Mental health: including symptoms and diagnosis of depression
- Neurocognitive health: including diminished human performance and executive functioning
- Safety: notably increased motor vehicle accident rates in both adults and teenagers

It is disappointing to see a prominent technology company portray a leader in a very intriguing field as someone whose strength or “superpower” is to “never sleep.” The obvious interpretation is that those with interesting jobs must work all the time and sacrifice sleep time. The superhero content in this ad will likely attract the attention of adults and teenagers alike.

Nationwide surveys such as the Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance System report that inadequate sleep is common not only in adults but in teenagers as well. Early school start times and

ever-increasing time spent on “devices” are two factors that can lead to short sleep in this group.³

It is disappointing when industry leaders with deep pockets do not use their influence to promote healthy lifestyles. Perpetuating the belief that “success” follows one who works all the time using technology and “never sleeps” is not a positive influence on our health and safety. Let us challenge industry to use its influence to promote health and healthy sleep.

CITATION

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DISCLOSURE STATEMENT

Dr. Dort is Editor-in-Chief of the *Journal of Dental Sleep Medicine*.