

Slow-wave sleep critical for reducing dementia risk



The risk of getting dementia may go up as you get older if you don't get enough slow-wave sleep. Over-60s are 27 percent more likely to get dementia if they lose just 1 percent of this deep sleep each year, a new study has found.

Slow-wave sleep is the third stage of a human 90-minute sleep cycle, lasting about 20-40 minutes. It's the most restful stage, where brain waves and heart rate slow and blood pressure drops, Science Alert report.

Deep sleep strengthens our muscles, bones, and immune system, and prepares our brains to absorb more information. Earlier this year, research discovered that individuals with Alzheimer's-related changes in their brain did better on memory tests when they got more slow-wave sleep. "Slow-wave sleep, or deep sleep, supports the aging brain in many ways, and we know that sleep augments the clearance of metabolic waste from the brain, including facilitating the clearance of proteins that aggregate in Alzheimer's disease," says neuroscientist Matthew Pase from Monash University in Australia.

"However, to date we have been unsure of the role of slow-wave sleep in the development of dementia. Our findings suggest that slow-wave sleep loss may be a modifiable dementia risk factor." Pase and colleagues from Australia, Canada, and the US examined 346 Framingham Heart Study participants who had completed two overnight sleep studies between 1995 and 1998 and between 2001 and 2003, with an average of five years between testing periods.

This community-based cohort, who had no record of dementia at the time of the 2001-2003 study, and were over 60 years old in 2020, gave researchers a chance to look into the link between two factors over time by comparing the datasets from the two in-depth polysomnography sleep studies, and then monitoring for dementia among participants up until 2018.

"We used these to examine how slow-wave sleep changed with aging and whether changes in slow-wave sleep percentage were associated with the risk of later-life dementia up to 17 years later," says Pase.

In the 17 years of follow up, 52 dementia cases were recorded among the participants. Participants' slow-wave sleep levels recorded in the sleep studies were also examined for a link to dementia cases.

Overall, their rate of slow-wave sleep was found to decrease from age 60 onward, with this loss peaking between the ages of 75 and 80 and then leveling off after that.

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Memorable 'No Bag Day' resonates with children



By Ali Amiri
Staff writer

On Monday, November 20, Avisa, a 12-year-old sixth-grader, along with all her schoolmates at an elementary school in Tehran received good news: "You don't need to bring your bags to school tomorrow."

"They told us not to bring our bags," Avisa says, lighting up as she remembers, "It made me really, very happy."

The idea of a "No Bag Day" for elementary students, however, had been in the works for a long time. The introduction of such a day in Iran's public education dates back to about 10 years ago. At that time, the administration was planning to close schools on Thursdays.

The country's Institute for the Intellectual Development of Children and Young Adults, along with the Deputy Ministry of Education, were working on a program to replace the traditional elementary schools curriculum on Thursdays with a joyful one for a bag-free day at schools.

At that time, the purpose of planning such a day in elementary schools was for students to attend school on Thursdays without their bags, and instead of reading their textbooks, they would engage in other activities.

The plan was supposed to be implemented on a trial basis in a number of schools in the country starting from 2014, and given that it yielded positive results, to be extended to other schools from 2015 onwards. While the plan had its supporters and opponents, with some believing that it would be impossible to run a classroom without books and bags, the Ministry of Education announced in June 2015 that the matter would be referred to the council of deputies, and the implementation of the plan would depend on its decision.

In other words, the plan's implementation was put on hold, until, in line with the goal of providing com-



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prehensive education to students and enhancing productivity in the teaching-learning process, April 23, 2023 was designated as No Bag Day. That day, elementary students in Tehran went to school without their bags and textbooks for the first time ever.

The official news regarding yesterday's No Bag Day was announced on Sunday, November 19. Avisa, relieved of the burden of a heavy backpack that typically contains up to seven textbooks and notebooks, along with a pencil case, lunchbox, and water bottle, went to school on Tuesday.

Her younger brother, Abtin, a seven-year-old first-grader, was also excited about the bag-free day. "They told us not to bring books, and that we're just going to play," he says.

However, education did not come to a halt on Tuesday. According to the educational authorities, students were provided with more space for playing, learning, developing various skills, and gaining new ex-

periences.

The siblings' experiences corroborate this, as both of them immensely enjoyed the No Bag Day – even though Abtin had no complaints about the weight of his backpack. However, instead of sitting through their regular classes, Avisa and her classmates "made handicrafts and read books."

Similarly, Abtin and his peers participated in various activities, including playing, drawing, making handicrafts, and, to top it all off, preparing and enjoying a fruit salad together.

"It was such a fun day," he says. Fortunately, the No Bag Day was a resounding success among children and parents alike, and was celebrated with great enthusiasm. Each child chose a specific skill and, based on that, they collaborated with their classmates in group and individual activities including crafting, cooking, and sewing small clothes. After engaging in these activities, they proceeded to play group games in the school yard.

Some students went the extra mile to entertain their classmates by donning traditional and local attire, reciting passages from the Shahnameh, performing folk songs and poems, and even staging theatrical performances.

Above and beyond that, some parents actively participated in this ceremony and brought various foods to enhance the students' celebration.

Avisa, who is already an avid reader, had the opportunity to enjoy reading storybooks and educational magazines under the guidance of her teacher.

"It was different, it was fun, and to sum it up, it was good," she says, expressing her desire for the day to be repeated. The communal enjoyment and camaraderie she experienced with her classmates resonated with her childhood spirit.

Abtin shared the same opinion, expressing his wish for such days to be frequent. When asked how often he would like to have No Bag Days, he answered, "Once a week would do."

New translations of Imam Khomeini's works

The Institute for Compilation and Publication of Imam Khomeini's Works has released new translations of his works in French, Italian, Spanish, Urdu and Arabic. 'Imam Khomeini, A Global Audience', a collection of letters written by foreigners and dignitaries to Imam Khomeini from all around the world, was recently published in French, Urdu, Italian and Spanish languages. The collection was previously compiled and published in English and Arabic.

The institute has translated and edited more than 10,000 letters for this volume. Also, an eight-volume collection of Imam Khomeini's writing and speech was compiled, translated and published in Urdu according to the needs of the audience of the subcontinent.

The original 22-volume collection of Imam Khomeini's Sahifah consists of historic speeches, messages, interviews, edicts, Sharia permits and letters by the late founder of the Islamic Republic.

It contains letters received by Imam in more than a half century until his passing in 1989. The collection is thought to be the most complete work that has been compiled and published in the field.

In addition, during Iran's National Book Week, a collection of Imam Khomeini's poetry is published in Arabic.

The collection of Imam Khomeini's poems is one of his outstanding literary-mystical works on the subject of real and genuine love for a true lover, that is, God Almighty.

Imam Khomeini's poetry also includes other mystical and moral subjects, and these poems were written at different times before and after the Islamic Revolution of 1979.

His poetry is not only full of mystical terms and romantic points, but also reflects his feelings, emotions, ideals and thoughts, and has been closely associated with moments of solitude and intimacy with the merciful God.

