

Family sleeping problems: Like mother, like child

Der Standard (August, 31th 2017, 11:23)

[Original article](#)

Swiss researcher analysed the sleeping behaviour of 191 primary school children. The result: Mothers influence the sleeping behavior of 191 pupils from primary school.

Basel – If mothers have problems with falling asleep or sleeping through also their children are often affected by sleeping problems. Researchers of the University of Basel came to that result. Among the sleeping quality of fathers and their children the researchers didn't find a connection during their study.

A team of scientists around Natalie Urfer-Maurer of the University of Basel investigated how sleeping problems of the parents could relate to the sleeping quality of their children. They analysed the sleep of 191 children at the age of primary school with EEG and asked the parents about their own sleeping quality and the sleep of their children.

As a result, the researchers came across a connection between the sleeping quality of mothers and of their children: Children of mothers with sleeping problems told that they have problems with falling asleep and sleeping long. According to EEG measurement these children are not so long in deep sleep. Scientists reported that they couldn't find a connection between the sleeping quality of fathers and their children.

Several interpretations

As reported by Urfer-Maurer and her colleagues a potential reason for that is the fact that on average mothers in Switzerland are still spending more time with the children than the fathers. In consequence the sleeping behavior between mothers and children could adapt stronger.

In general, there could be different explanations for the observed connection of the parent's and the children's sleep: The children could copy the sleeping habits from the parents. It's also possible that parents with sleeping problems are observing their own and their children's sleeping behavior more attentively. According to researchers, this excessive focus could disturb the quality of the sleep. Besides, it can't be excluded that genetic factors cause a similar sleeping behavior inside a family. (APA, sda, August 31th, 2017)