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Children Are Our Future
PEDIATRIC ACADEMIC SOCIETIES

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Less sleep may add up to more pounds in adolescents

*Study finds inadequate sleep a risk factor for childhood obesity,
especially among boys, middle school students*

VANCOUVER, BRITISH COLUMBIA – Adolescents who don't get enough sleep may gain more than some extra time to play video games or text their friends. They also may gain weight, according to research being presented Tuesday, May 4 at the Pediatric Academic Societies (PAS) annual meeting in Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada.

Other studies have shown a relationship between sleep and weight issues, particularly in young children. However, this is one of the first studies to document an association between sleep duration and weight in adolescents, even after controlling for calorie intake, activity level and depressive symptoms.

In research led by Leslie A. Lytle, PhD, from the Center for Child Health, Behavior and Development at Seattle Children's Research Institute, study investigators collected data on 723 adolescents (mean age 14.7 years) about how long they slept on weeknights and weekends, and how frequently they experienced sleep problems. On three separate occasions, researchers also asked the youths about the foods and beverages they had consumed the prior day to determine how many calories they consumed.

To measure activity, participants wore accelerometers on their belts for seven days. Unlike pedometers, which count the number steps walked, these highly specialized devices measure movement on three different planes. In addition, the wearer cannot see any data on how active they are.

"The use of accelerometers and 24-hour (dietary) recalls was unique in the study of sleep and weight in youth and is a real strength of the study," Dr. Lytle said.

Researchers also measured participants' weight, body mass index (BMI) and percentage of body fat.

Results showed that shorter sleep duration was related to higher BMI. The relationship was especially strong for boys and for middle school students compared to those in high school. In girls, only less sleep on weekends was related to higher BMI.

"Sleep has long been recognized as an important health behavior," Dr. Lytle said. "We are just beginning to recognize its relationship to overweight and obesity in children and adults alike."

For more information or to arrange an interview with Dr. Lytle prior to the PAS meeting, call 612-804-4892 or 206-884-4892. To contact Dr. Lytle during the PAS meeting, call the PAS Press Room at 778-331-7694. To see the abstract, go to http://www.abstracts2view.com/pas/view.php?nu=PAS10L1_588&terms

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The Pediatric Academic Societies (PAS) are four individual pediatric organizations who co-sponsor the PAS Annual Meeting – the American Pediatric Society, the Society for Pediatric Research, the Academic Pediatric Association, and the American Academy of Pediatrics. Members of these organizations are pediatricians and other health care providers who are practicing in the research, academic and clinical arenas. The four sponsoring organizations are leaders in the advancement of pediatric research and child advocacy within pediatrics, and all share a common mission of fostering the health and well being of children worldwide. For more information, visit www.pas-meeting.org. Follow news of the PAS meeting on Twitter at <http://twitter.com/PedAcadSoc>.