

Having a zzzzz problem? Your smartphone can be a sleep killer



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Mapple Shi, a white-collar worker in Shanghai, first realized she might not be getting enough sleep after reading the “Healthy Sleep Survey of China 2022,” which concluded that only 35 percent of people in the country get enough sleep, pegged at an ideal eight hours a night.

“I usually sleep for about six hours a night, and I feel generally okay the next morning,” she said. “So I didn’t really pay much attention to the issue, but apparently I’m sleep-deprived.”

The survey, carried out by Chinese Sleep Research Society, was released on March 18 to coincide with World Sleep Day.

It covered more than 9,000 people around the country — 58 percent of them women; 42 percent men. Three quarters of respondents complained about sleeping problems, including insomnia and poor sleep quality.

Nearly 30 percent of the interviewees, like Shi, were between 19 and 25 years old. Among them, 44 percent said they go to bed after midnight, and 30 percent said it takes them at least half an hour to fall asleep.

Shi graduated from university last year and went to work as a copywriter. While still on campus, she said she typically went to bed before the 11:30pm curfew and got up around 7:30am.

Now out in the work world, she gets up at the same time but goes to bed around 1am.

“It feels like my personal time has been severely reduced since graduation,” Shi said. “I leave the office at 6:30pm if no overtime is needed and get home 40 minutes later. And if I go to bed too early, I would feel that I wasn’t doing anything but work.”

The survey showed that Chinese people sleep on average 6.9 hours per night, about an hour less than 10 years ago. City residents sleep generally less than those living in the countryside, and people in 30 second-tier cities, such as Hefei and Lanzhou, sleep the least.

What’s causing less sleep? A closer look at the survey results points the finger at smartphones.

Nearly 90 percent of the interviewees said they are doing something on their smartphones before going to sleep — mostly watching drama series or playing games. The activities tend to postpone bedtime.