LIFESTYLE

FEELING BLUE?

Blue light at night could cause depression-like symptoms finds study

BLUE-COLOURED NIGHT LAMPS have the worst effect on one's moods while exposure to red light at night has significantly less evidence of depressive symptoms, says a new study.

New research has shown how colours of night lamps could influence moods. In a study done on hamsters, researchers found that blue light had the worst effects on mood-related measures, followed closely by white.

Hamsters exposed to red light at night had significantly less evidence of depressive symptoms and changes in the brain linked to depression, compared to those that experienced blue or white light.

The only hamsters that fared better than those exposed to red light were those that had total darkness at night, reports *Science Daily*.

The findings may have important implications for humans, particularly those whose work on night shifts makes them susceptible to mood disorders, said Randy Nelson, co-author of the study and professor of neuroscience and psychology at the Ohio State University.

"Our findings suggest that if we could use red light when appropriate for night-shift workers, it may not have some of the negative effects on their health that white light does," Nelson said.

The study appears in the August 7, 2013 issue of *The Journal of Neuroscience. IANS*

Get some shut-eye

How poor sleep ups junk food craving

IF YOU DON'T sleep well, you could well feel the pressing urge to gorge on junk food - thus doing much harm to your health, says new research that seeks to shed light on the link between poor sleep and obesity.

Researchers at the University of California, Berkeley, examined the brain regions that control food choices and found that inadequate sleep makes one crave junk food.

"What we have discovered is that high-level brain regions required for complex judgements and decisions become blunted by a lack of sleep, while more primal brain structures that control motivation and desire are amplified," said Matthew Walker, a UC Berkeley professor of psychology and neuroscience and senior author of the study published August 6 in the journal *Nature Communications*.

Moreover, he added: "High-calorie foods also became significantly more desirable when participants are sleep-deprived. This combination of altered brain activity and decision-making may help explain why people who sleep less also tend to be overweight or obese." *IANS*

ALIGN YOUR LIFE

Open the door

THE FIRST TIME I came across Chi Nei Tsang was in Thailand a few years ago. I was feeling homesick and decided to visit a spa for a massage to cheer myself up. My therapist suggested I try Chi Nei Tsang – a form of abdominal massage to soothe the stomach and navel area. Having never tried this before, I gave her the go ahead. What followed was an outstanding experience that I cherish even today. After the massage, I was emotional and had tears in my eyes for no apparent reason. Upon learning more about Chi Nei Tsang, I was able to understand what exactly happened that day.

A special massage technique was developed in ancient China to help Taoist monks strengthen and refine their bodies. "Chi" means energy, and "Nei Tsang" means internal organs. Chi Nei Tsang refers to a unique technique that is used to massage internal abdominal organs. The navel is the energetic centre of the body, where emotions and memories are stored. With this practice one is able to increase the energy flow to internal organs by specific manipulations and massaging a series of points in the navel area. It is around the navel area - the centre where all systems meet that massage is mostly directed at. In other words the massage opens up blockages, improves digestion and most importantly releases blocked emotions.

The second and the third chakras are located at the navel and lower abdomen. The second chakra is the seat of emotions while the third chakra is a channel for receiving energy and knowledge. This massage not only works on internal organs but also helps in bringing about balance in these two chakras. The emotional release is instant after the massage and the surge of energy is easily felt.

There are many ways to release emotional stress – hypnotherapy, journal writing, counseling, and meditation. However the most unique and relaxing way is a session of Chi Nei Tsang – where you are opening the hidden doors of energy to live a well-balanced life.

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