

L LIFESTYLE



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Get some shut-eye

Sleep quality affects decision-making ability

FRAGMENTED OR LOWER sleep efficiency may affect executive function as it is linked to decline in cognitive abilities of older people over a period of three to four years, a study has found.

Poor sleep quality is associated with a 40 to 50 per cent increase in the odds of clinically significant decline in executive function, which was similar in magnitude to the effect of a five-year increase in age.

"This study provides an important reminder that healthy sleep involves both the quantity and quality of sleep," said M. Safwan Badr, president of American Academy of Sleep Medicine.

The study involved 2,822 community-dwelling older men at six clinical centres in the US

Participants had a mean age of 76 years.

An average of five nights of objective sleep data were collected from each participant using a wrist actigraph. Cognitive function assessment included evaluation of attention and executive function using the Trails B test.

According to the study authors, executive function is the ability for planning or decision making, error correction or trouble shooting and abstract thinking. The study appeared in the journal *Sleep*. IANS



Food for thought

Seven portions of fresh fruits, veggies for long life

FOR A LONG and healthy life, eat at least seven portions of fresh fruits and vegetables, suggests a study that could lead to change in dietary recommendations in some countries.

Eating fruit and vegetables is associated with a lower risk of death overall and deaths from heart disease/stroke and cancer. "The higher the intake of fruit and vegetables, the greater the protective effects seemed to be," the study found.

And vegetables may pack more of a protective punch than fruit. For the study, researchers analysed lifestyle data for more than 65,000 randomly selected

adults aged at least 35, derived from annual national health surveys for England between 2001 and 2008.

They tracked recorded deaths from among the sample for an average of 7.5 years. On average, the survey respondents said they had eaten just under four portions of fruit and vegetables the previous day.

During the monitoring period 4,399 people died (6.7 per cent of the sample). The same benefits were not found in a portion of frozen/tinned fruit.

The study appeared in the *Journal of Epidemiology and Community Health*. IANS

ALIGN YOUR LIFE

The Five Elements

The ancient Chinese science of Feng Shui is based on the theory of five elements - fire, earth, metal, water and wood. These elements govern our surrounding environment and also affect our physical wellbeing. The foundation of Chinese medicine is also based on the same premise. It is believed that our bodies also house these five elements and when they are not in proportion, illnesses seep in.

The five elements interact with one another in a productive or destructive way. The production cycle is used in Feng Shui to enhance or balance the environment, while the destruction cycle is used to destroy the element. To understand the productive cycle, we must first understand the nature and roles of these elements.

So lets start with our first element - fire. It is useful for success and drive as it creates strong energy. By using fire colours in your environment, you will be boosting the career area. Using wooden items can also help in enhancing the fire element as wood helps in creating fire. However, to destroy fire, water is used. The next element is earth. When fire burns, ashes are created, which is earth. This element is associated with stability and good health. Using earthen objects and shades of yellow can help enhance the earth element. To destroy earth, we need to use wooden objects as wood weakens earth. When earth is dug up, metal is discovered, so the next element is metal. It helps in reducing harsh energy and can be enhanced with metallic colours or metal objects. To destroy the metal element, fire is used as it melts metal. When metal corrodes, water is created. So the next in line is water. Water is considered to be an auspicious element and is responsible for prosperity. This element can be enhanced through shades of blue and by displaying a water body. Earth objects and colours are used to destroy the water element. When water feeds plants, wood is created. Therefore the next element is wood. This element is associated with growth and longevity. To enhance wood, bamboos or green colour can be used. However to destroy wood, metal elements can be introduced as a metal axe can chop logs of wood. And once again we come to the starting point as wood helps in creating fire.

The essence of Feng Shui lies in these elements and once you understand the dynamics between the five elements, balancing them becomes easy.

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