

# The New Zealand Herald

## Fear of missing out (FOMO) causing major sleep issues for teens



Teens are staying up late using technology and not getting enough shut-eye. Photo / Thinkstock

A fear of missing out (FOMO) is giving teenagers sleepless nights as they stay up late texting, chatting and gaming.

It's so bad that seven out of 10 Australian teens are sleep deprived, says Dr Chris Seton, a pediatric and adolescent sleep physician.

Without intervention they are vulnerable to learning problems, family disharmony, school absenteeism, poor self-esteem, depression and obesity, he says.

Children aged 12-to-18 need an average of nine hours of sleep a night.

A good way for parents to tell if they are not getting that is to monitor how late they sleep at weekends, says Dr Seton of the Woolcock Institute of Medical Research.

"It's a red flag if they sleep more than two hours beyond their normal wake up time."

The institute, which is linked to the University of Sydney, has opened a specialist fortnightly clinic for children with sleeping disorders.

Screen use is the most common problem among teenagers, but they can also suffer from obstructive sleep apnoea, psychological insomnia and a jetlag-type condition known as delayed sleep phasing.

Some children develop delayed sleep phasing at puberty, causing their body clock to go out of sync. This causes tiredness and anxiety and they need specialist help to solve the problem.

The clinic will provide access to specialists in medical and psychological aspects of sleep as well as doctors who understand allergies and ear, nose and throat conditions.

They will work together to diagnose and treat conditions such as toddler night terrors, insomnia, sleep apnoea and delayed sleep phasing.

The clinic has two fully equipped suites where sleep patterns can be monitored overnight.

"This will significantly reduce the waiting time for diagnosis and treatment," Dr Seton says.

Dr Seton has also developed a website called Sleepshack, where teenagers can have online consultations with him and a sleep psychologist.

The program costs \$140 and is not covered by Medicare. However, there is also a free section that gives most parents the information they need to correct sleep problems related to screen use.

- AAP

**EVENING DRESSES ON SALE**  
 Made To Order  
 32 Colors & 3600+ Styles  
 Starting at AU\$ 79.99  
[Shop Now](#)  
 JJSHOUSE.COM