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## Beauty sleep: experimental study on the perceived health and attractiveness of sleep deprived people.

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#### Abstract

**OBJECTIVE:** To investigate whether sleep deprived people are perceived as less healthy, less attractive, and more tired than after a normal night's sleep.

**DESIGN:** Experimental study.

**SETTING:** Sleep laboratory in Stockholm, Sweden.

**PARTICIPANTS:** 23 healthy, sleep deprived adults (age 18-31) who were photographed and 65 untrained observers (age 18-61) who rated the photographs.

**INTERVENTION:** Participants were photographed after a normal night's sleep (eight hours) and after sleep deprivation (31 hours of wakefulness after a night of reduced sleep). The photographs were presented in a randomised order and rated by untrained observers.

**MAIN OUTCOME MEASURE:** Difference in observer ratings of perceived health, attractiveness, and tiredness between sleep deprived and well rested participants using a visual analogue scale (100 mm).

**RESULTS:** Sleep deprived people were rated as less healthy (visual analogue scale scores, mean 63 (SE 2) v 68 (SE 2),  $P < 0.001$ ), more tired (53 (SE 3) v 44 (SE 3),  $P < 0.001$ ), and less attractive (38 (SE 2) v 40 (SE 2),  $P < 0.001$ ) than after a normal night's sleep. The decrease in rated health was associated with ratings of increased tiredness and decreased attractiveness.

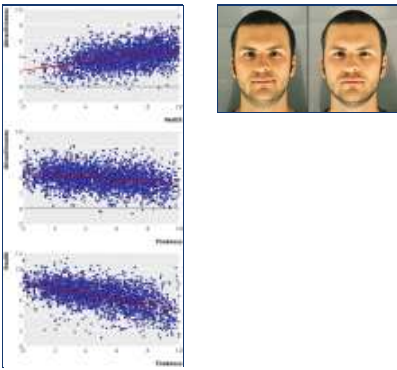
**CONCLUSION:** Our findings show that sleep deprived people appear less healthy, less attractive, and more tired compared with when they are well rested. This suggests that humans are sensitive to sleep related facial cues, with potential implications for social and clinical judgments and behaviour. Studies are warranted for understanding how these effects may affect clinical decision making and can add knowledge with direct implications in a medical context.

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