



Backgrounder

October 14, 2008

Mini Med School 2008 at the Child & Family Research Institute

Mini Med School is a popular annual series of lectures and interactive sessions about ground-breaking health research. Each session is accessible, interesting and entertaining. Members of the public are invited to attend this year's event featuring local and international sleep experts participating as speakers, moderators and through pre-recorded video talks.

"Sleep is the key to health. It's like water, you can't survive without it," says Dr. Osman Ipsiroglu, scientific leader of this year's Mini Med School and an expert on sleep disorders in children. "However culture affects our understanding of sleep and there is still much that remains unknown in the field of sleep research."

This year, Mini Med School runs from October 15 to November 26, 2008. It is held Wednesday evenings, 7 to 9 p.m., at the Chan Centre for Family Health Education at CFRI (950 West 28th Avenue, Vancouver).

October 15, 2008

NIGHT/DAY: Social and Cultural Perceptions of Sleep

This session explores perceptions of sleep through diverse topics such as how understandings of dreaming and sleeping has changed over time; dream interpretation in Christianity, the Talmud and ancient Greek and its relation to modern psychotherapy; sleep ecology; and how views of sleep differ in China and Japan from the Western centrist approach. Includes a screening of *Sandman*, a short film by Vancouver-based artist Stan Douglas.

Interview Opportunity: **Dr. William McKellin, moderator**
Department of Anthropology, University of British Columbia
How cultural understandings of sleep have changed throughout history

October 22, 2008

HANDS ON: What you Always Wanted to Know About Sleep

Participants take part in activities to explore how respiration, blood oxygen saturation and electrical activity in the brain change when people are asleep or experiencing sleep disorders. Includes a live demonstration by a pajama-clad volunteer who will fall asleep while hooked up to a polysomnogram.

Interview Opportunity: **Les Matthews, moderator and main presenter**
Allied Health, Thompson Rivers University
The variability of vital signs and their interpretation; the need for sleep research and the need for different interpretations

October 29, 2008

SLEEP, LOVE, CHANGE: Sleep Patterns Throughout Life

From fetuses and newborns, to young adolescents in love and long-married couples, this session explores sleep at life's many stages. Also features a discussion about how animal hibernation works.

Interview Opportunity: **Dr. Dan Rurak, moderator**
Child & Family Research Institute
Sleep patterns of the fetus and infants

Gerhard Kloesch, main presenter
Department of Neurology, Medical University of Vienna; Behavioural Biology,
University of Vienna
How and why sleep patterns change as people age and their relationships evolve

November 5, 2008

NON-RESTORATIVE SLEEP: Causes and Consequences

What is the value of a good night's sleep? This session examines the impact of sleep disturbances and disorders on mental health, job and school performance, driving and the economy. Speakers include:

- **Francois Dionne**, PhD candidate and health economist, School of Population and Public Health at UBC
- **Dr. Jonathan Fleming**, psychiatrist, UBC and Sleep Disorders Program, Vancouver Coastal Health
- **Dr. Margaret Weiss**, senior associate clinician scientist at CFRI and child psychiatrist at BC Children's Hospital
- **Dr. David Wensley**, respirologist, BC Children's Hospital

Interview Opportunity: **Dr. Najib Ayas, moderator**
Sleep Disorders Program, Vancouver Coastal Health
The public health and safety consequences of sleep deprivation and sleep apnea

November 19, 2008

DREAMING AND THE BRAIN: From Freud to Modern Understanding

This session explores past and present understandings of dreams and consciousness and how interpretations of sleep and dreams have inspired artists.

Visuals: An electronic copy of *Sleepwalker*, a thermography image by artist Stephan Reusse of Cologne, Germany, is available upon request for one-time publication

Interview Opportunity: **Dr. J. Allan Hobson, main presenter**
Professor of Psychiatry, Emeritus, Harvard Medical School
Dreams as the result of random energy signals in the brain. Author of *Dreaming: A Very Short Introduction*

November 26, 2008

GRAND FINALE

Participants will have the opportunity to test what they've learned with an interactive quiz and to visit interactive stations with demonstrations of sleep lab equipment; information about ongoing research into sleep disorders and disturbances; and displays of art inspired by sleep and dreams.

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For more information or to arrange an interview, please contact:

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