



MEDIA RELEASE

**Sleep deprivation in youth:
Time for a wake-up call
Douglas researcher Reut Gruber says more attention
needs to be dedicated to the health issues involved**

Montréal, March 14, 2011 - With an estimated 60 to 70% of Canadian students arriving at school extremely fatigued, the problem of sleep insufficiency in youth needs to be addressed. March 18th is World Sleep Day. Reut Gruber, clinical psychologist and researcher at the Douglas Mental Health University Institute, in her role as spokesperson, is also hosting the International Conference on Sleep and Obesity in Kids as well as leading an innovative sleep awareness program.

Reut Gruber notes that “sleep deprivation is linked to obesity, diabetes, hypertension, metabolic syndrome, and cardiovascular problems. In addition, poor sleep has been shown to impair academic performance, learning, memory, and functions essential for academic success. Moreover, inadequate sleep interferes with mood and affects mood regulation.”

**HEALTHY NIGHTS and DAYS – March 17, 2011
International Conference on Sleep and Obesity in Kids**

Recent research has found evidence of a link between sleep duration and overweight and obesity in children and youth. Shorter sleep duration results in hormonal changes comparable to those associated with high risk such as obesity, diabetes, and hypertension. Despite the scientific knowledge about the critical importance of sleep in weight regulation, no full-scale program has been developed in Canada to help sleep-deprived children and adults. This conference is co-chaired by Reut Gruber and Laurette Dubé, Scientific Director of the McGill World Platform for Health and Economic Convergence.

Healthy Nights and Days, is part of the international conference organized by the McGill World Platform for Health and Economic Convergence (MWP) in partnership with the UK Science and Innovation Network, the Douglas Mental Health University Institute, and the Montreal Neurological Institute. This event, and others presented during this two-day conference, will bring together scientists and policy- and decision-makers from the UK, USA and Canada.

Where: McGill University, Thomson House, 3650 McTavish Street, Room 406
When: Thursday, March 17, 8:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m.

SLEEP FOR SUCCESS – Pilot project on sleep awareness for the youth

Kids at the Harold Napper Elementary School in Brossard are lucky! They will be the first in the province to benefit from the SLEEP FOR SUCCESS awareness program, put together by Reut Gruber in partnership with Gail Sommerville and the Riverside School Board. It aims to promote a balanced lifestyle that integrates sleep education into the existing health curriculum. In stressing the interplay between sleep, diet, and physical activity, the program promotes behaviours that will lead to a lifelong commitment to healthy living. “The implementation of such a program can have incredible positive effects for a school board and its surrounding community. We are hoping this program will be implemented into school curriculum across the province and the rest of Canada,” says Dr Gruber.

<http://www.douglas.qc.ca/news/1087>

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Information:

Marie France Coutu
Communications and Public Affairs
Tel.: 514 761-6131, ext. 2769
Cell.: 514-835-3236
marie-france.coutu@douglas.mcgill.ca

About World Sleep Day, March 18, 2011 – worldsleepday.org

World Sleep Day (WSD) is an international annual event, intended to be a celebration of sleep and a call to action on important issues related to sleep, including medicine, education, social aspects and driving. It aims to lessen the burden of sleep problems on society through better prevention and management of sleep disorders.

About the Douglas – douglas.qc.ca

The Douglas is a world-class institute affiliated with McGill University and the World Health Organization. Its mission is to treat people suffering from mental illness and offer them both hope and healing. The Institute's teams of specialists and researchers continually advance scientific knowledge, integrate it into patient care, and share it with the community to increase awareness and thus eliminate stigma around mental illness.

About the McGill World Platform for Health and Economic Convergence – mcgill.ca/mwp

The McGill World Platform for Health and Economic Convergence (MWP) is a unique initiative led by McGill University's Desautels Faculty of Management and Faculty of Medicine. For more than a decade, the MWP has been developing a powerful new paradigm to address the world's most pressing global problems. Located at the nexus of economics and health, the MWP brings together scientists, industry leaders and policy experts from across disciplines, sectors and borders to examine the root cause of these problems.