

**MEDIA RELEASE**

**Thirty minutes more sleep makes for “cooler-headed” children**

**Montreal, October 15, 2012** – A modest addition of sleep each night—27 minutes on average—among children ages 7 to 11 leads to a significant improvement in their ability to regulate their emotions and limit restless-impulsive behaviour in school. Conversely, a 54-minute decrease in sleep is associated with a detectable deterioration in these measures. These results come from a study by Reut Gruber, PhD, researcher at the Douglas Mental Health University Institute and professor in the Department of Psychiatry at McGill University.

Her study entitled “Impact of Sleep Extension and Restriction on Children’s Emotional Liability and Impulsivity” was just published in the November 2012 issue of *Pediatrics*.

“These new findings support the importance of sleep among school-age children,” explains Reut Gruber. “We need to provide sleep education to parents, educators, and students featuring data on the critical impact of sleep on daytime function. Sleep must be prioritized.”

Although it is well known that healthy sleep is essential for alertness and other key functions related to academic success, research involving the impact of the amount of sleep on a child’s day-to-day behaviour in school is limited. An estimated 64 percent of school-age children (ages 6 to 12) go to bed later than 9:00 p.m. and 43 percent of boys ages 10 to 11 sleep less than the recommended amount each night.

**Sleep and IQ**

Two years ago, Reut Gruber and her colleagues found that longer sleep in healthy school-age children was associated with a better performance on IQ tests. More precisely, an average sleep time of 10 hours was associated with good performance.

According to Reut Gruber, the significance of sleep insufficiency is under-recognized with respect to youth health, and she is working towards a change in the school curriculum with her partners in school boards.

About the Douglas – [www.douglas.qc.ca](http://www.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.