

Sleep deprivation hits students hard

As junior Tommy Chang sits through his classes throughout the day, he finds it harder and harder to pay attention. Words blur as he drifts in and out of sleep. Chang is sleep deprived, or suffering from a lack of sleep.

Chang is an IB diploma candidate and gets loads of work every day. The IB diploma is the most demanding track in high school and the work takes tolls on students like Chang.

In addition to the heavy workload, Chang, like many high school students, has other responsibilities and methods of procrastination to attend to.

"I'll usually get home and do my chores, then start my homework, eat lunch, either finish up or watch a show, then go to bed," Chang said when asked about his after school routine. Once all of his homework and responsibilities are out of the way, Chang finally gets to unwind and go to sleep. By this time, however, it is already late at night and his sleep schedule stays unchanged.

A high school student can suffer from sleep deprivation for many reasons. However, the main cause is the deadly combination of procrastination and a heavy workload. Everyone's work load is dependent on the rigor of their classes but no matter what classes you take, you're bound to have a lot of work.

Chang, like many high school students, has his own method to manage his time more effectively.

"I've been trying to use my agenda to improve my schedule recently," Chang said when asked how he could break his unhealthy sleeping habits. "I find that making a checklist really improves my efficiency when I have a lot of assignments."

Although Chang is making strides to fix his sleeping habits, he still suffers from sleep deprivation. "I'm usually tired

during school, especially during the middle of the school day," Chang said.

When a student is suffering from sleep deprivation, it greatly affects their academic performance in school. Chang is no different.

"My lack of sleep affects my performance in school sometimes," Chang said. "Most of the time I can make sure I'm paying attention, but occasionally I'll drift off or zone out."

Despite the issue of sleep deprivation being prominent in high schools like AHS, not much can be done to help students. Work loads cannot be altered too much and the habit of procrastination is one that is hard to break. To get enough sleep every night, students must take initiative to be on top of their school work and other responsibilities.

According to assm.org, the primary effect of sleep deprivation is excessive daytime sleepiness. A sleep deprived person is likely to fall asleep when forced to sit still in a quiet situation, such as during a meeting or class.

Sleep deprivation can affect your mood as well. Common moods among sleep deprived teens are irritability, anxiety or lack of motivation. Sleep deprived teens can also suffer from lack of concentration, lack of energy, forgetfulness and fatigue.

Another problem that exists within sleep deprivation are the methods used to combat the effects. Many teens turn to caffeine to cop with their sleepiness and some even turn to drugs such as adderall. These methods can, rather than help ones sleep deprivation, build a dependence on these artificial energizers.

There are positive and healthy ways to help your sleep deprivation however, According to medicalnewstoday.com, some suggestions for good sleep habits include: going to bed when tired, following a routine for bed and wake-up times and avoiding food 2 to 3 hours before bedtime.

Also, medicalnewstoday.com recommends engaging in regular exercise during the day, keeping the bedroom quiet, dark and cool and turning off electronic devices when you go to bed.

Director of CDC's Division of Population Health Wayne Giles

recognizes that Americans do not get enough sleep in general, "As a nation we are not getting enough sleep," Giles said.

Giles also recommends techniques that anyone can do to get a good night sleep, "Lifestyle changes such as going to bed at the same time each night; rising at the same time each morning; and turning off or removing televisions, computers, mobile devices from the bedroom, can help people get the healthy sleep they need."

Many students like Tommy Chang struggle through their school day without a sufficient amount of sleep. If a student is suffering from sleep deprivation, it is important to contact a doctor or make sure to work on your sleep schedule.