Welcome to the ACES Newsletter for 2011
From Dr Sarah Blunden

Why sleep education?

There is much debate today on whether we and our children get enough sleep. There are large individual differences in what one person’s sleep needs may be compared to another and so it is difficult to know if we are getting “enough” sleep. But what is clear is that between 20-30% of children and young people report that they are sleepy and want more sleep. Much evidence exists which relates insufficient sleep to negative daytime consequences. So we need to improve sleep for those who need more. The first step of course is understanding and increasing awareness about sleep and the consequences of sleep loss if we are to give individuals the opportunity to continue a healthy and productive development through to a healthy and productive adulthood. There is a need for the implementation of sleep education programs as part of normal health curricula in schools as well as to parents and communities.

ACES trial underway in South Australia

This year has seen the blossoming of sleep education in Australia and overseas. The Australian Government and the South Australian Health Department have funded Dr Sarah Blunden and a team of researchers from the University of South Australia (Prof Tim Olds, Dr Jim Dollman, Dr Carol Maher, Dr John Petkov) to conduct a randomised control trial of the ACES sleep education program in 12 South Australian middle schools over 2011 and 2012.

To date, we have delivered the ACES program to over 100 middle school students with another 140 to be targeted by the end of 2012. This is the first trial of its size in Australia.

The program has been improved since its 2006 trials and targets not only students but now also includes additional parent information and active participation that we hope will encourage improved sleep habits in the family home and help students to sustain better sleep habits.

Preliminary analyses suggest that sleep duration WAS increased in students who received sleep education.
International exposure of the ACES program

The ACES program is broadening its international collaborations.

Trials of the program have been undertaken in:

1. New Zealand - The University of Auckland has undertaken a trial in 29 high school students. The results showed that sleep duration WAS increased by 11.5% compared to those who did not receive the program. Results are in press (see page 4)
2. Birmingham UK - The ACES program is being adapted for use in a trial to assess if sleep education may have a secondary effect on weight status in young people. This trial is led by Dr Shahrad Taheri, Senior Lecturer in medicine, diabetes and endocrinology at the University of Birmingham.
3. Grant submissions are ongoing in England and New Zealand for additional trials of the ACES Programs with new collaborations on track in Canada.

PHILIPS adapts ACES program online

Philips International has chosen the ACES program to promote sleep education internationally. The ACES junior school program was launched worldwide on WORLD SLEEP DAY on March 16th as part of Philips International's sponsorship of the ACES program and in conjunction with the World Association of Sleep Medicine (WASM)

The ACES sleep education program for junior schools has been adapted and remodelled as an smaller online program as part of the Philips SimplyHealthy@schools program. The aim of this program is to make available health messages to junior school students, with sleep being the first health module to be launched in this way. Thanks to Philips, sleep education information will be available FREE around the world to any school group who wishes to increase their knowledge of sleep. The SimplyHealthy@schools is currently undergoing a trial in a South Australian metropolitan school, Walkerville Primary School, Adelaide South Australia. Findings, presented at the World Association of Sleep Medicine conference in Quebec City in September 2011, show increased sleep duration in junior school children. The SimplyHealthy@schools sleep module has been embedded into the school curriculum and has been enthusiastically embraced by students.

One of the aims of this program is to make sleep education accessible to rural and remote Australian communities initially and potentially those all over the world. Indeed, Dr. Sarah Blunden has conducted educational talks to the high school, junior school and to parents in Penola, South Australia between August 18 – 20, 2011, with activities planned in Coober Pedy and Alice Springs in remote central Australia.

Recent and upcoming international conference presentations:

International Pediatric Sleep Association, Rome Italy, December 2010

- “Australian Centre for Education in Sleep: Sleep Education Down Under" (S. Blunden)

World Association of Sleep Medicine, Quebec City, Canada, September 2011

- “Australian Centre for Education in Sleep: Results of Australian and New Zealand trials" (S. Blunden)

Australasian Sleep Association, Sydney, Australia October 2011

- “The importance of parental engagement in promoting behavioural changes in health interventions: A sleep education example" (G. Rigney, S Blunden)
- “The Australian Centre for Education in Sleep (ACES) program: sleep education trials for middle school students in Australia and New Zealand” (S. Blunden)
- “Can a sleep education program improve pre-adolescent’s sleep and health-related quality of life?” (H. Etherton, S Blunden)
ACES and Paediatric Sleep Clinic team expand

The Australian Centre for Education in Sleep incorporates the Sleep Education arm as well as the Paediatric Sleep Clinic. To keep up with the increasing demand for these services, the ACES team has expanded.

The Paediatric Sleep Clinic now employs psychologist Brooke Michell to run its community based group programs, which, established in 2008, have been enabling more parents of sleep disordered children to gain professional help to improve sleep in their children. The availability of rural and remote therapy via video conferencing links is a focus in 2012 and sleep products to solve sleep problems are now available at the website www.sleepshop.com.au.

New administration and ongoing professional IT staff complete the picture so that we can ensure that all visitors to the website can receive up to date in formation and quick responses to enquiries.

All inquires regarding sleep education, information or general assistance with sleep problems can be accessed via the website on enquiries@sleepeducation.net.au

ACES Employees

Group Clinics

Brooke Michell graduated with a Masters in Clinical Psychology from the University of South Australia. Throughout her university degree she focused her studies on children and families. Specifically. both her Honours and Masters theses considered children and behaviour. Dr Blunden supervised Brooke in her Masters research which explored the relationship between sleep deprivation and behavioural outcomes in preschoolers. Brooke’s previous work experience includes working in a community mental health care team, within a multi-disciplinary Pain Clinic, and in a wellbeing clinic aiming to improve attachment relationships with children in foster care. After observing a number of ACES Community Group programs, Brooke is now working with the ACES team to offer more group clinics across the Adelaide metropolitan area. Brooke will be working in a part-time capacity to deliver regular community group programs, in addition to offering counselling at the Paediatric Sleep Clinic.

Administration

Rachael Spooner is a psychology graduate (B. Psych Hons) who works in an administrative role for the ACES team. Rachael began working for ACES in March 2011. Under the guidance of Dr Blunden, Rachael manages and responds to any enquiries that are sent to the ACES email address(enquiries@sleepeducation.net.au). Rachael organises any updates that need to be made to the ACES website and communicates these between Julian Khoo (see below) and Dr Blunden. Rachael has also played a major role in designing and coordinating the first ACES newsletter. Rachael is also currently working as a Research Assistant on Dr Blunden’s ACES trial and Restless Legs Questionnaire project. Rachael is very interested in the area of paediatric sleep. She has recently begun a PhD in Clinical Psychology at UniSA and plans to study the effects of sleep disorders on childhood development. Rachael hopes to one day follow in Dr Blunden’s footsteps as a Clinical Sleep Psychologist and Sleep Researcher.

IT Consultant

Julian Khoo has been working part-time for ACES as an IT Consultant since May 2009. Julian began working with Dr Blunden to update and redesign the ACES website and providing occasional IT Support when needed. Working closely with Dr Blunden, Julian provided the technical know-how to bring the ACES website up to date and maintain its currency. Beginning in March 2011, Julian works closely with Rachael Spooner in updating the ACES website. He has over 5 years experience in IT Support and a few more in additional roles as Systems & Database Administrator.

Watch this space!

Dr Blunden’s book is to be launched next month

Blunden S, & Willcocks A. “The Sensible Sleep Solution: A guide to sleep in your baby’s first year” Wakefield Press Australia (in press)

Available in November at www.sleepshop.com.au


---

**Australian Centre for Education in Sleep (ACES)**

Paediatric Sleep Clinic
239 Magill Road
Maylands SA 5069
Ph: (08) 8366 6507
www.sleepeducation.net.au

Paediatric Sleep Community Clinics:
Seaton Central Community Centre.
Adelaide, South Australia.
(08) 8241 0211

www.sleepshop.com.au

---

**We know about sleep——what now?**

In trials of the ACES programs sleep knowledge in Australia, sleep knowledge was improved. In the New Zealand trials, sleep duration improved. But in many other sleep education studies (see publication list #1 above for a review) there were no changes to sleep habits or sleep duration. Many students reported that they were interested in sleep education and found it important. So why is it that sleep education does not always improve sleep habits and duration? This must be the focus for all those undertaking sleep education.

It is imperative that the delivery of knowledge about sleep, delivered through sleep education programs equates to ACTUAL sleep behaviour change in those individuals who have less than optimal sleep. Motivation, intention to change behaviour, making sleep education engaging and including families and communities in the process are likely to improve the chances that sleep education will improve sleep. This is our challenge for the future. Watch this space!