

National Research Council of Italy

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Sleep is one of our most urgent needs, especially at the beginning of our life: newborns just sleep to complete themselves, interrupting just to eat. Such order evaluate in time through life until we sleep very little, very disturbed, quite interrupted: several kind of disorders happens: on the other side, we are among the few mammals whose female has menopause, apparently not useful for evolution: this could mean that we have been able to prolongate life in most cases over the age our organism is able to work perfectly. Everybody experiences at least after fifties, but often even after forties, kinds of malfunctioning: smiles become obese, sleep is interrupted, and apneas gives the impression to sleep while the loss of consciousness has not the same restoring effect than before. Some therapy do exist, more care has to be given to ourselves, but at the end it is a quite natural phenomenon, slowly driving to death instead of the fastest way still experienced in some underdeveloped countries even nowadays, as it was just a few generations ago even among us. It is thus necessary to comply with it, slimming, recurring to polyphasic sleep, like

Leonardo da Vinci, but also like every newborn, just with a different ratio sleep/awake in each phase. Monitoring is useful to understand tricky phenomena not evident: the recalled sleep apnea is not perceived until sleep risk to occur even when driving. Respiration could be easily monitored, as in the European Project ROBO MD, for instance combining accelerations and electrocardiogram, when such cheap recording are only available. Autography is even easier, sensing just movement, provided that a better resolution than the traditional minute, say at least a second, is used to really appreciate the dynamics. Heart rate variability is an easy an important derived information useful to measure stress (Circulation 1991): not just at sleep, but during the day, letting us understand that our relationship life is often much more stressful than heavy physics work in the past, thus probably affecting our sympathy-vagal balance in such a way that even night little rest is not anymore fully able to recover steady state.