

MEET HANNAH: A LIFE-LIKE REPRESENTATION OF A SLEEPLESS BRIT IN 2050

Submitted by: Holy Wow! Ltd

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- “Hannah” is a red eyed prediction of what our bodies could look like if we continue to live on just 6 hours of sleep a day
- UK bed specialist Bensons for Beds and sleep expert Dr Sophie Bostock explored the effects that a lack of sleep over an extended period of time can have on the human body
- These include short-term memory loss, skin aging, hair loss, and obesity
- However, there are various strategies Brits can take to help improve their sleep

Link to images is here - <https://flic.kr/s/aHBqjBU2xC>

With the UK in the midst of a tiredness epidemic, and the average Brit only getting 6 hours and 24 minutes sleep per night* – just what impact does a lack of sleep have on our health and physical appearance?

Bensons for Beds and sleep expert Dr Sophie Bostock have predicted what our bodies could look and feel like by 2050 if we continue with the same sleep patterns, in an effort to raise awareness around the importance of making time for quality sleep.

Meet Hannah, a life-like visual representation of a future sleep-deprived Brit in 25 years time if we don't change our sleep habits.

From short term memory loss and dramatic skin aging to obesity and hair loss - the 3D render is a dramatisation, based on scientific evidence-based research, on the physical impacts that a lack of sleep can have on the human body.

“Research into the importance of consistent, good quality sleep for our health and wellbeing has accelerated in the last few decades. Many of us don't realise that haphazard daily routines and lack of sleep interfere with our circadian rhythms, the 24-hour cycles which control our physiology,” says Dr Sophie Bostock.

The evidence for the design of Hannah was collated from published research papers in academic journals since 2010.* This included the physical impacts on the human body — including brain, immune system, muscles, skin, eyes and hair — that a lack of sleep can do to the body.

Using this information, the team then worked with animators and artists to create Hannah - a visual representation of Britain's sleep deficit dilemma.

Lack of sleep and an inability to ‘switch off’ has affected Hannah's skin giving her multiple skin problems including jaundice and wrinkles. Her sleep deprivation has also increased her sensitivity to pain and exacerbated spontaneous pain symptoms such as shoulder and back pain.

Dr Bostock says: "Hannah is a thought-provoking illustration of the holistic impact that sleep has on maintaining overall health. Studies show that prolonged sleep deficiency can put you at a higher risk for conditions that may impact the heart - including obesity, heart disease and Type 2 diabetes."

A summary of Hannah's key conditions include:

Head

Memory loss

During sleep, your brain forms connections that help you process and remember new information. Hannah's lack of sleep has negatively impacted both her short and long-term memory.*

Hair

Chronic poor sleep has meant that Hannah has developed alopecia.*

Eyes and mouth

Red eyelids, bags under her eyes, fine lines, and droopy corners around her mouth are all a result of continual poor sleep.*

Nose

Hannah's sleep deprivation has also made her more vulnerable to respiratory infections like the common cold and flu.*

Skin

Living consistently on only 6 hours of sleep has had a significant impact on Hannah's skin, reducing skin elasticity and dramatically increasing signs of aging.*

Body

Chronic back and shoulder pain

Disturbed sleep has made Hannah sensitive to pain. This bidirectional relationship between sleep deficiency and pain serves to perpetuate and amplify her sleep deficiency and pain via a vicious cycle in chronic pain populations such as her shoulder and back.*

Stomach

Restricted sleep has affected both her leptin and ghrelin hormones, which control feelings of hunger and fullness. Without enough sleep, your brain reduces leptin and raises ghrelin, which is an appetite stimulant. The flux of these hormones could explain nighttime snacking or why someone may overeat later in the night.

A lack of sleep has also made her feel too tired to exercise. Over time, Hannah has stopped working out which has made her gain significant weight around her tummy.*

Muscle atrophy

Living on empty day in and day out has caused Hannah to get muscle atrophy with her arms and legs shrinking in size and shape.*

Swollen legs

Prolonged sleep deficiency has given Hannah heart disease, prematurely affecting her life expectancy - one of the signs of which is swollen ankles. *

Lisa Richards, Marketing Director at Bensons comments: "Hannah is a worst-case scenario prediction of what could happen to somebody if they do everything badly in terms of poor sleep routine and poor mattress support. Of course, she doesn't represent all Brits, but the reason we wanted to create this model was to make people think more carefully about their overall sleep experience. Using this visual makes it easier for people to identify with the issue and the key signs."

Bensons for Beds propose a number of strategies for Brits to take better care of themselves when it comes to sleep — including meditation, staying hydrated and investing in a supportive mattress.

How you can avoid becoming like Hannah:

- Get out of bed at the same time as often as possible - including at weekends. This will help to keep your circadian rhythms in sync.
- Be physically active. The government recommends 150 minutes of moderate or 75 minutes of vigorous physical activity per week, plus 2 strength building sessions, and 2 balance sessions for good health.
- Seek out natural light during daylight hours. Take breaks outside whenever possible, and work by a window if you can. Two hours before bed, turn down bright overhead lights, and keep your bedroom as dark as possible.
- Finish your main meal at least two hours before you get ready for bed. Eating late can disrupt the quality of your sleep.
- Protect the last 30 minutes of the day to wind down and switch off. Keep your phone and screens outside the bedroom. Use your bed for sleep and intimacy, and nothing else.
- Invest in a comfortable supportive mattress. Mattresses need replacing every 8-10 years otherwise they can become less supportive and not a nice, clean place to sleep.

What can I do if I'm worried about my sleep?

If you are struggling with insomnia, you can find advice from Dr Sophie Bostock on the Bensons for Beds Sleep Hub. However, the recommended treatment for insomnia, if all else fails, is to speak to a medical professional for advice. Your GP may be able to give you advice about healthy sleep habits, or rule out other conditions which could be affecting your sleep. The recommended treatment for insomnia is a talking therapy approach called Cognitive Behavioural Therapy for Insomnia (CBT for Insomnia).

To find out if a lack of sleep can age you visit the Bensons website.

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Notes To Editors

Source materials

* Direct Line sleeping survey

* Research and academic journals published since 2010 - for the complete list of journals used please contact Holy Wow PR

About Bensons for Beds www.bensonsforbeds.co.uk

Bensons for Beds Ltd operates from over 170+ stores across Britain, through its website www.bensonsforbeds.co.uk and telesales phone number 0808 144 6160, offering its customers three ways to shop.

It is headquartered in Accrington, Lancashire and has distribution centres in Ayr, Huncoat and Tewkesbury and employs over 1,800 across all its head office, store, manufacturing and distribution locations.

Bensons is backed by Alteri, the specialist European retail sector investor, establishing Bensons as a standalone business in 2020.

Bensons is investing significantly in building a portfolio of brands, the majority made to order at its own manufacturing centre in Cambridgeshire, catering to every sleep need.

That portfolio includes:

- Simply by Bensons, the affordable, feel-good quality range which features mattresses, divans and bed frames
- Slumberland, the proud owner of a number of awards, including the Good Housekeeping Institute accreditation and the Product of the Year award.
- An exclusive range of beds and mattresses under its heritage Staples & Co brand which has been re-inventing sleep since 1895.
- Bensons is the exclusive home of iGel NanoTech, mattresses with a patented Graphene Technology, that helps customers regulate their body temperature to stay comfortable throughout the night.

Bensons also owns the eveSleep brand, a brand that knows every great day starts the night before and focuses on helping the UK rise and shine through a selection of rolled mattress collections. eveSleep retails from the evesleep.co.uk website.

With nearly 70 years of retail and 100 years of manufacturing experience in sourcing the best quality beds, frames and mattresses, Bensons understands how to bring customers the perfect, tailored sleep experience.