When You Can't Sleep
by Horace J. Digby

Research is going swimmingly on my new book, *Why We Sleep*, (it's really more of a pamphlet). It Seems all animals sleep, especially those enrolled in night classes, but little is known about sleep. First-hand scientific study is difficult because people who sleep are not awake while they do it. Researchers have to rely on what subjects remember about sleep later when they wake up (which usually isn't much because the subjects were asleep at the time). Most experts are not people who actually sleep well, but are people who have watched large numbers of other people sleep (which, for the most part, is not that much to watch). What research there is shows that sleep is broken into three parts:

*Pre-sleep*. This is actually sleep—so there is no real reason for attaching the word "pre" to it. Pre-sleep calms our minds—and why shouldn't it, us being asleep and all.

*REM*, or *Rapid Eye Movement sleep*. This is where dreaming occurs. Dreaming is important because it gives us something to do while we sleep. Otherwise we might get bored and wake up. Dreaming sleep can be quite active and some people require a short nap afterwards.

*Feigned sleep*. This type of sleep is often observed in humor columnists when it is their turn to take out the garbage.

There is no reported commercial use for sleep. Motels provide a place to sleep and would loose one third of their business if people quit sleeping. Other human activities have become sports, but there is little development in the arena of competitive sleeping. Nor has sleep been developed as an amusement park ride or entertainment. We know that sleep is the opposite of "awake," but that isn''t very helpful.

Those with difficulty sleeping may have a condition called insomnia. After prolonged lack of sleep (which scientists call, "prolonged lack of sleep") some people experience psychotic interludes. Others simply take up stamp collecting. Experts suggest that reading can cure insomnia. They have requested reprints of this article.

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