

Deep Sleep Beneficial

The "rest cure" for TB went out with the pill age.

Today treatment for TB focuses on isoniazid and the other pills that fight TB germs. But rest, especially deep sleep, has benefits for everyone, whether sick or well. Benefits unsuspected until very recently.

Research into sleep and dreams has turned up some surprising evidence. Some of it suggests that a special kind of emotional learning takes place during dreams. Dreams—in some way not yet understood—are part of the brain's effort to absorb and reorganize emotionally intense experience.

In one experiment, Dr. Ramon Greenberg, of the Veterans Administration Hospital in Boston, showed a gruesome film of an autopsy to two groups of subjects.

Then he measured the emotional tension caused by the viewing. He allowed one group to get a good night's sleep that night. But he awakened the second group each time their brain waves indicated they were about to dream.

The next day all subjects were shown the film again. The first group who had been allowed to dream, were much calmer the second time. But the other dream deprived group showed just as much anxiety at the second viewing as at the first.

Dreams, it seems, help digest the past.

Dreams occur during sleep at regular intervals, about every 90 minutes. The electrical waves of the brain become as active as when the sleeper is fully awake.

These periods—called REM sleep because of the rapid eye movements that take place—last for 20 to 30 minutes at a stretch. They are now considered so important that ads for sleeping pills in medical magazines tell physicians how much REM sleep the pills will produce.

Rest alone does not cure TB. But deep sleep and dreams are part of healthy living.