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Sleep diplomacy alone will widen sleep disparities

Authors' reply

Timothy Daly argues that pre-existing sleep disparities according to socioeconomic status will make behavioural approaches and lifestyle advice widen sleep disparities. Although we fully agree that strong public policy measures must be implemented to reduce socioeconomic status inequalities in brain health,¹ and in particular those that might impact sleep problems, there is good evidence reporting the success of behavioural interventions to improve sleep conditions in different populations.² Specific interventions have been proposed in low-socioeconomic status populations, which should also be included in our sleep diplomacy³ category. As Rao and colleagues suggest, "the existence of very different barriers to healthy sleep across different contexts and even across individuals implies the need for a diverse set of sleep policy tools" and "research across all these different contexts is needed to guide policy".⁴ Simply waiting for full funding of initiatives without using affordable, available, and comprehensive strategies to improve sleep can potentially exacerbate these sleep-related socioeconomic inequalities.

Like brain health diplomacy,⁵ sleep diplomacy incorporates science diplomacy, which integrates several disciplines that include economic and social considerations for sleep improvement. Each approach should be complementary and not interfere with one another. Without adequate data, information, and public policy initiatives (ie, without sleep diplomacy), we will not be able to decrease sleep inequalities.

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