



PRESS RELEASE

Renowned Professor Discusses WCMC-Q Students' Involvement in Breakthrough Sleep Study

Doha, October 13, 2009—Cornell psychology professor and best selling author James Maas, PhD, is including WCMC-Q premedical students in his latest study on the relationship between sleep and overall health.

“This is a huge study and it’s got a nice cross-cultural element,” says Dr. Maas, who was in Doha this week to give lectures to WCMC-Q students for his Psychology 101 course. “I’m excited to conduct this study in Qatar as well as in New York because I think students in Doha could benefit from giving sleep more of a priority. Many students in Doha practice a very nice custom of spending time with their parents and grandparents, but it’s a custom that could take away from study time and sleep time. We’re seeing a lot of students trying to survive on five or six hours when they are supposed to have at least nine.”

“Sleep deprivation affects alertness and it shortens your life,” continued Maas, whose book “Power Sleep” topped the best selling US book charts when it was released.

At Cornell University in Ithaca, New York, Dr. Maas’ Psychology 101 course draws as many as 1300 students, making it the largest live lecture in the US. While working on his latest book, which reviews sleep-monitoring systems, he found a new product that impressed him—the Zeo Personal Sleep Coach—and decided to use it for a study involving 450 of his students from both Ithaca and Qatar. He considers the study especially pertinent to medical students.

“More than a few doctors aren’t getting enough sleep, and this affects everything, including their energy level, stamina, how patient they are with their patients, how quickly they can diagnose uncommon disorders and how quickly they can pick up and parse out treatments,” Dr. Maas said. In addition, he says there are at least 89 definable sleep disorders.

To collect data for the study, students used Zeo for several nights. Zeo consists of a wireless headband that monitors brainwaves and a small alarm clock-like bedside display. The bedside display receives signals from the headband, interprets which phase of sleep you are in, and displays your sleep data. Each morning, the students received a sleep score, called ZQ, and, over the course of the study, analyzed their own their sleep trends to apply what they learned in the classroom.

WCMC-Q students say the study has caused them to think more seriously about their sleep. “One thing I realized, and I think it’s really important, is that even if we stay up late studying and working for many hours, we won’t be providing the best health care to our patients because our brains just won’t be

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functioning well,” said Nour Barakat, a WCMC-Q second-year premed student participating in the study.

Ends

NOTES TO EDITORS

Established in partnership with Qatar Foundation, WCMC-Q is part of Weill Cornell Medical College (WCMC) of Cornell University, the first US institution to offer its MD degree overseas. WCMC-Q shares the triple mission of WCMC: a dedication to excellence in education, patient care, and biomedical research.

WCMC-Q offers an innovative program of pre-medical and medical studies leading to the Cornell University MD degree. Teaching is by Cornell and Weill Cornell faculty, including physicians at Hamad Medical Corporation (HMC) who hold Weill Cornell appointments.

Faculty and staff of WCMC-Q and WCMC are building the research capacity of Qatar in partnership with Qatar Foundation, HMC, the Ministry of Health and other organizations, with a focus on high quality research in genetic and molecular medicine, women’s and children’s health, gene therapy, and vaccine development.

Website: www.qatar-weill.cornell.edu

About Qatar Foundation

Founded in 1995 by decree of His Highness Sheikh Hamad Bin Khalifa Al Thani, Emir of Qatar, Qatar Foundation is a non-profit organization focusing on education, scientific research and community development. Under Qatar Foundation’s umbrella are Education City, which comprises elite universities, several academic and training programmes and Qatar Science and Technology Park, which boasts more than 21 world class companies involved in scientific research and development.

Chaired by Her Highness Sheikha Mozah bint Nasser Al Missned, Qatar Foundation also aims to enhance lives through community development initiatives including Doha Debates, Reach out To Asia and Al Jazeera Childrens Channel.

Joint venture partnerships in the areas of design, ICT, telecommunications, policy studies and event management contribute to fulfilling the objectives of Qatar Foundation.

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