



# The Alarm Clock of Executive Function: An Analysis of Sleep Measures in Correlation to Executive Function



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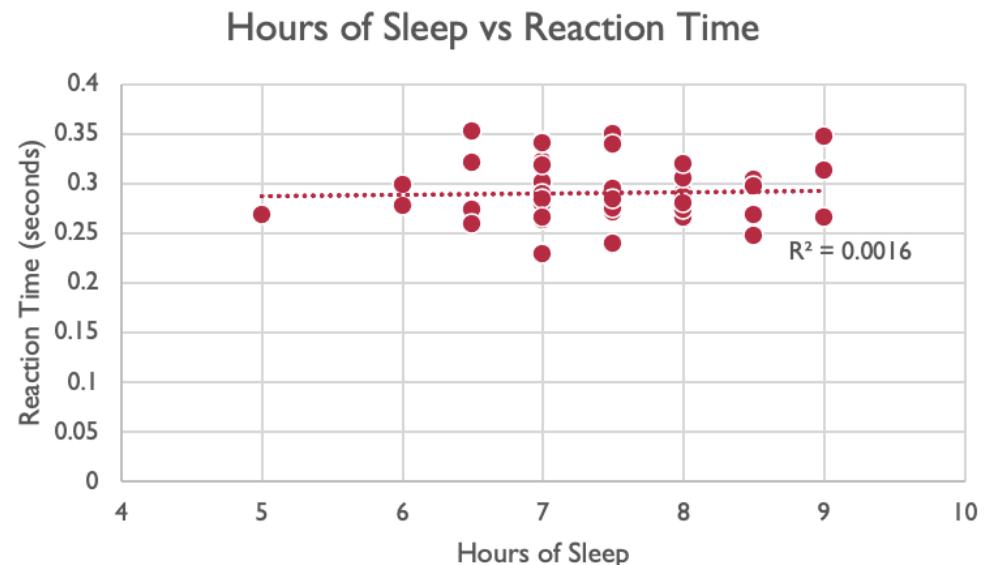
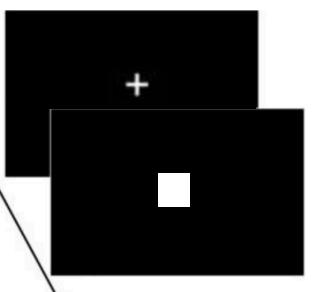
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## Introduction

- Sleep is important to a number of brain functions, including how neurons communicate. Sleep also plays a role in removing toxins in the brain that build up during wakefulness
- Sleep deficiencies are linked to chronic health problems and cause behavioral impairments** leaving individuals vulnerable to attention lapses, reduced cognition, delayed reaction time, and mood swings
- Given these relationships, **we hypothesized that higher amounts of average sleep would correlate with faster reaction times, especially in executive function tasks**

## 1. No correlation between average nightly sleep and basic reaction time

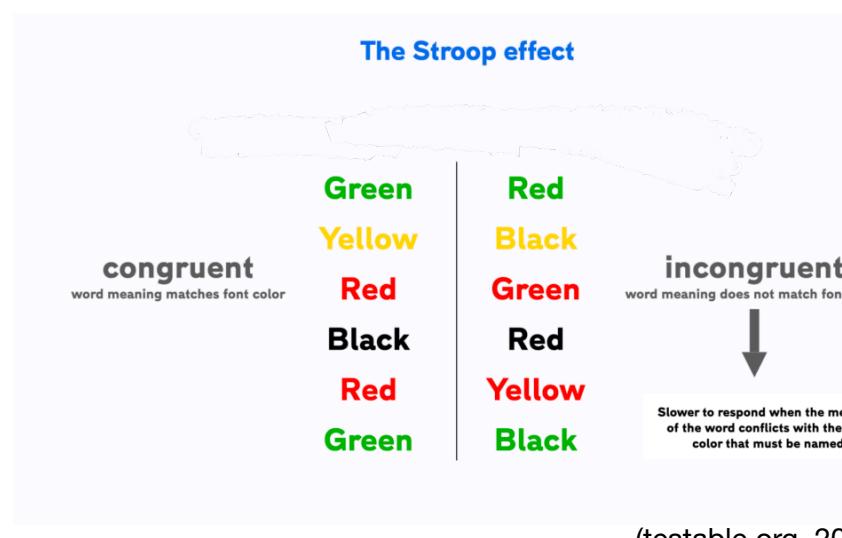
- The data shows no relationship between the reported nightly sleep and basic reaction time
- The effects of decreased sleep is not captured in this simple reaction time test



A lower level of reported sleep showed no relationship with reaction time

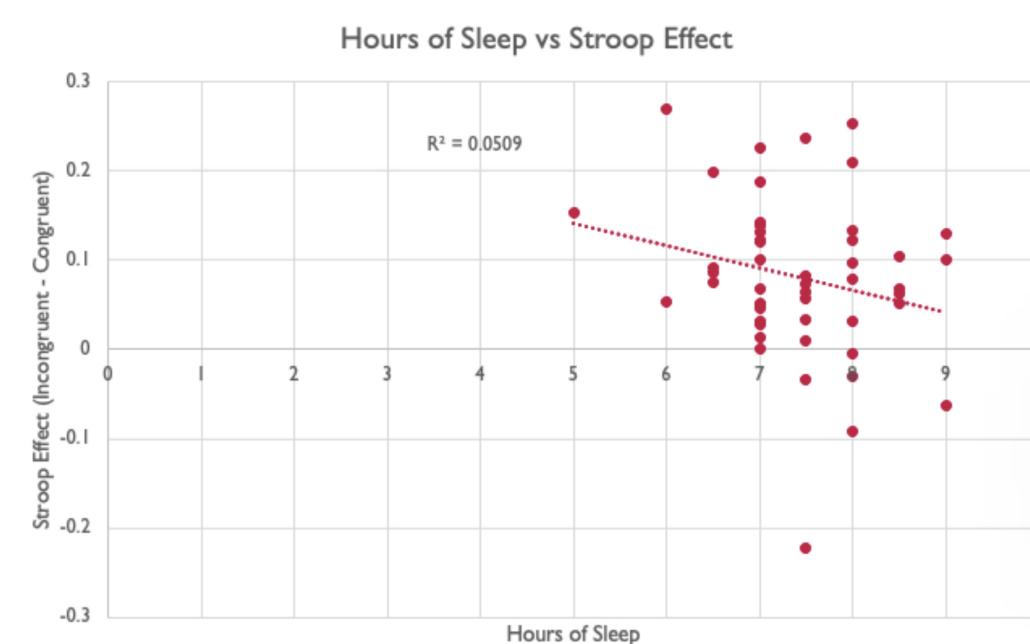
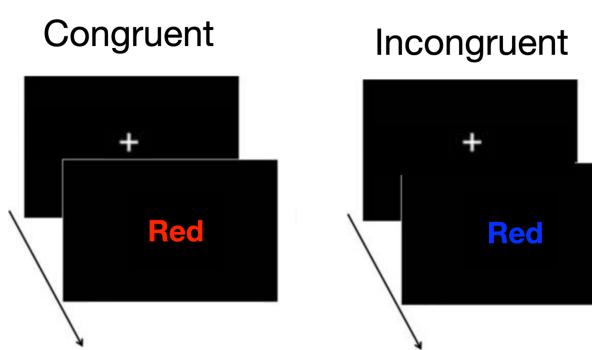
## Methods

- We collected self-reported information about **sleep, basic reaction time, and executive function** performance from 48 participants ( $F = 33$ , ages 18-35)
- Computerized tasks were used to assess executive function performance in the Stroop task
- We calculated a Pearson correlation between a subject's reported daily sleep with their reaction time performance as well as the Stroop effect



## 2. A higher amount of average nightly sleep is correlated with a smaller Stroop effect

- Results show a negative relationship between Stroop effect and hours of sleep
- Shows correlation of a decrease in executive function performance with decreased sleep



A lower amount of sleep is correlated with a higher Stroop effect

## Discussion and Future Directions

- We found lower levels of sleep were related to differences in executive function, but not general reaction time**
- Our results are consistent with prior literature showing a decrease in cognitive control performance with an insufficient level of sleep
- When studying sleep, limitations include: overall correlation not directly meaning causation, limitations within outcomes when derived from self-reporting surveys (validity and reliability), participant's caffeine intake and tolerance, sample size and demographics
- Future analyses for the project will include analyzing other tasks to capture different facets of **cognitive control (inhibition, shifting, and updating)**

## References

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- Rechtschaffen, A. (2015, January 7). *Current perspectives on the function of sleep.* Perspectives in Biology and Medicine.
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