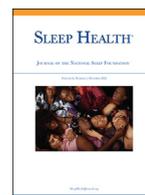


Contents lists available at [ScienceDirect](https://www.sciencedirect.com)

# Sleep Health

Journal of the National Sleep Foundation

journal homepage: [sleephealthjournal.org](https://www.sleephealthjournal.org)

## Editorial

# Disparities in sleep



Credit for the journal cover image and the images above: Fannie Sosa and Navild Acosta, with permission from the artists.

Sleep has been depicted in art to express many things: religion, dreams, rest, danger, innocence, and countless others.<sup>1</sup> Given the universality of sleep, it naturally has a wide scope of meaning in the artistic world. Art has often been used to document or communicate the trials of an individual or group, and can act as a snapshot of an aspect of society. Art can also send a powerful message, as in *Guernica* by Pablo Picasso, a powerful anti-war painting. The images above, showing a group of African Americans sleeping, were taken at an art installation called *Black Power Naps* (also called *Siestas Negras*) by Navild Acosta and Fannie Sosa. Presented first in 2011, this powerful installation has been displayed in several cities.

An art installation describes a work placed into a 3-dimensional (usually interior) space. It invites intimacy between the art and the viewer. *Black Power Naps* tackles sleep disparities, a topic that has received scientific attention.<sup>2</sup> Socially disadvantaged groups, related to race, ethnicity, gender, and socioeconomic factors, have been documented to have sleep and overall health disparities. The installation is made up of 6 stations created to promote rest. Attendees are encouraged to participate in the stations and to enjoy the universal right to sleep.<sup>3</sup>

In this case, art is being used as a medium to call attention to the disparities between Black Americans and other Americans in sleep, rest, and naps. While the issues of sleep disparities are cause enough for artistic outreach, the installation leads viewers to consider other aspects of racial inequity in America—but does so in a way that feels unique and empowering. As is the case with much art, this installation can be interpreted in different ways, perhaps bringing more

attention to the effects of our society on sleep and how those effects are disproportionately felt by the Black community. Regardless of one's personal understanding of the installation, *Black Power Naps* serves as a valuable tool for documenting the conceptualization of sleep both as a commodity not afforded to a marginalized group and as a right that is being stripped by society.

### Declaration of Conflict of Interest

The authors have no conflicts of interest to disclose.

Joaquin Fernandez-Duque  
Meir H. Kryger, MD\*  
Yale University, New Haven, CT, USA

\*Corresponding author: Meir H. Kryger, MD, Yale University, New Haven, CT 06520, USA

E-mail address: [meir.kryger@yale.edu](mailto:meir.kryger@yale.edu) (M.H. Kryger).

### References

1. Kryger M. *Sleep in Art: How artists portrayed sleep and dreams in the last 7000 years*. Amazon; 2019.
2. Jackson CL, Powell-Wiley TM, Gaston SA, Andrews MR, Tamura K, Ramos A. Racial/ethnic disparities in sleep health and potential interventions among women in the United States. *J Womens Health (Larchmt)*. 2020;29(3):435–442.
3. *Siestas Negras*. <https://www.korwater.com/blogs/discover/siestas-negras>.