

hindustan

New Delhi/METRO ■ Vol. LXXXVIII No. 28 ■ Price ₹ 3

'Parents, peer pressure m exams a textbook case of s



cracking the boards

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NEW DELHI: Three in four students preparing for the Boards find meeting their parents' expectations the biggest stressor and squeeze out extra study time by sleeping less and skipping at least one meal, a five-city survey has revealed.

The Exam Preparation Practices Study by the Indian Medical Academy shows how students are staggering under exam pressure. For 41% of the 625 students surveyed, nervousness over their preparedness is the biggest stress factor. For 29%, it's beating their peers.

For more than two in three students, studying 8-10 hours is the norm. To ramp up study hours, three in four sleep less than 7-8

hours a day while eight in 10 skip family meals and opt for junk food at their desk. Nine out of 10 say they don't bathe every day.

Unrealistic expectations from the family often prevent students from giving their best.

"Very few students are able to cope. Most lose focus and exhaust themselves," says senior paediatrician Dr Sanjeev Bagai, who is part of the academy.

Exhaustion leads to three in four students falling sick with infections, vomiting, bodyache or sleeplessness, says the study done in Delhi, Mumbai, Chennai, Kolkata and Bangalore.

So how to cope? Counsellors suggest short breaks, regular meals and some entertainment.

"Parents need to relax and ensure their child takes short breaks, including at least one hour for leisure. This strengthens memory," says Dr Rajesh Sagar, additional professor, department of psychiatry, AIIMS.

» STUDENTS FEEL THE HEAT, P3

EXAMS OR PUNISHMENT?

Highlights from the Exam Preparation Survey. Figures show the highest and lowest responses.

What's your target score in exams?
65-70% marks **6%**
More than 90% **13%**

What's the biggest stressor?
Family's expectations **74%**
Doing better than friends, relatives **29%**

What do you do to achieve your target?
Study all day **25%**
Study more by cutting back on play and leisure time **75%**

Source: Indian Medical Academy survey in five cities (Delhi, Mumbai, Chennai, Kolkata, Bangalore)

HT helps beat the stress

For the next one month, HT will help you and your child handle exam stress. Follow the coverage in HT (hindustantimes.com).