

## **Can Too Much Homework Make Your Child Sick? Study Finds Clear Connection Between Students' Stress and Physical Illness**

From *The Daily Mail*

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Doing more than three hours of homework per night may be making your child sick.

A study conducted by Stanford Graduate School of Education surveyed more than 4,300 students from ten high-performing public and private high schools in affluent California communities, and found that excessive homework causes high stress levels and physical health problems.

“We found a clear connection between the students’ stress and physical impacts -- migraines, ulcers and other stomach problems, sleep deprivation and exhaustion, and weight loss,” co-author of the study, Denise Pope, told CNN.

Published in the *Journal of Experimental Education*, the study found that while three hours of homework per night was “average” for these students, there were children doing “way more” –as many as five hours per night.

Fifty-six per cent of the students in the study cited homework as a primary stressor in their lives, despite the fact that most U.S. students' homework load has remained relatively stable since 1984, according to the Brookings Institute's 2014 Brown Center Report on American Education.

But in privileged schools, where competition among students is fierce and pressure of high academic performance overwhelming, many students describe schoolwork as a dominating force in their lives with many parents worried that they had not seen their children for an entire weekend because they were attempting to complete homework assignments.

“We need intervention around homework,” said Ms Pope, adding that it's not just with high school students. “We have the same data from the younger years.”

The fact that children growing up in poverty are at-risk for serious disturbances including drug and alcohol abuse, depression and anxiety, is well-supported by research and widely accepted. But a growing body of research, including Ms Pope's study, reveals that privileged children may also be at risk thanks to the unrelenting pressure placed on them in school.

“When you say that poverty is a risk factor, that doesn't mean that all poor kids are troubled,” explained Suniya S. Luthar, professor of psychology at Arizona State University. “It's exactly the same for upper-middle-class children of upwardly mobile families. All we are saying is that a larger proportion of these children are at risk, as compared to the average American community.”

Ms Pope said the magic number when it comes to homework is “nothing over two hours” for high school and “no more than 90 minutes” in middle school.