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A FULL HOUSE MAY HELP YOU SLEEP

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Getting a good night's sleep may depend on the comfort that comes from living with loved ones, more than the quiet that comes from living alone. This should come as good news to Georgians, as the average Georgian household is larger than other countries in the region, but not quite as large as their Caucasian neighbors. In a poll conducted by Georgian Opinion Research Business International in 2009, covering 8 countries, we found a significant correlation between the number of people living in the same residence and both the instance of reported insomnia and feelings of stress. Other lifestyle attitudes were also correlated, such as trusting neighbors and general happiness.

The Caucasian Household

Georgians, along with many other Caucasian and Central Asian cultures, have long traditions of cohabitation for reasons both economic and cultural. Children often live with their parents well into adulthood, and it's not uncommon for as many as four generations to live in the same house.

The average Georgian household has just under 4 members (3.95), while their Caucasian neighbors Armenia and Azerbaijan each have an average household size of well over four people (4.49, 4.35). The eastern European countries included in the poll, along with Russia, have comparatively smaller households, with an average size of around 3 people. For this study a "household" was defined by all members living in the same building, using the same kitchen space.

Household Size and Well Being

GORBI asked respondents in each country "In the recent several weeks have you experienced [feelings of stress or insomnia]." Unsurprisingly, experiencing these problems was not uncommon for the population as a whole. Respondents were also asked if they were "generally happy" and if they were "worried about being robbed in the street."

Regardless of country, those who live alone more frequently reported feelings of stress and were much more likely to report having experienced insomnia at some point. Furthermore, the likelihood of reported stress decreases with each additional family mem-



ber up to a point. It's interesting to note that, contrary to the larger trend, there is a noticeable rise in reported insomnia in households with 7 or more members. Perhaps this is the point at which the positive effect of a loving family no longer compensates for their snoring. The correlation between household size and insomnia is somewhat strong at .13, while household size and stress correlate at .06.

People living in larger households also report being happier, having higher trust in their neighborhoods, and being less likely to be worried about crime.

The data in this article is from the 2009 study "Health in Times of Transition: Trends in Popula-

tion Health and Health Policies in CIS countries," which was primarily funded by the European Commission (DG Research - FP7). I was conducted by Georgian Opinion Research Business International, and consisted of 8 nationwide polls totaling 16200 respondents. The error margins for studies of this kind are +/- 3.5% at a 95% confidence interval. All correlations are significant at .05 using Spearman's rho.

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