

1. Record Nr.	UNINA9910960551503321
Titolo	Awakening and sleep-wake cycle across development / / edited by Piero Salzarulo, Gianluca Ficca
Pubbl/distr/stampa	Philadelphia, : J. Benjamins Pub., c2002
ISBN	9786612255038 9781282255036 1282255037 9780585461298 0585461295 9789027297884 9027297886
Edizione	[1st ed.]
Descrizione fisica	vi, 281 p. : ill
Collana	Advances in consciousness research, , 1381-589X ; ; v. 38
Altri autori (Persone)	FiccaGianluca SalzaruloPiero
Disciplina	612.8/21
Soggetti	Developmental neurobiology Sleep-wake cycle
Lingua di pubblicazione	Inglese
Formato	Materiale a stampa
Livello bibliografico	Monografia
Note generali	Bibliographic Level Mode of Issuance: Monograph
Nota di bibliografia	Includes bibliographical references and indexes.
Nota di contenuto	Awakening and Sleep-Wake Cycle across Development -- Editorial page -- Title page -- LCC data -- Table of contents -- Awakening -- Development of wakefulness -- Methodological issues in the study of arousals and awakenings during sleep in the human infant -- Awakenings from infants' sleep -- Arousals in infants during the first year of life -- Spontaneous arousal and awakening in preterm and full- term infants -- Awakening and sleep-wake cycle in infants -- Awakenings in school-age children -- Awakenings, sleep-wake cycle and thermal environment in neonates -- Time pattern analysis of activity-rest rhythms in families with infants using actigraphy -- The eyes of parents on infants awakening -- Mother-infant relationship as a modulator of night waking -- Sleep fragmentation and awakening during development -- Arousals and awakenings in infancy -- Arousal responses to hypercapnia and hypoxia in infants and children -- The scoring of arousals in infants -- Index of names -- Index of terms --

Sommario/riassunto

Sleep and wakefulness undergo important changes with age. Awakening, a crucial event in the sleep-wake rhythm, is a transition implying complex physiological mechanisms. Its involvement in sleep disturbances is also well known. This collective volume is the first attempt to systematically approach awakening across development. A methodological section considers criteria to define awakening in a developmental perspective. Theoretical considerations on development of wakefulness and on its relation to consciousness are included and provide a vigorous impulse to go beyond present criteria and classifications. Age changes are the core of studies on development: a section of the book examines old and new data from preterm to infants up to children, underscoring the main turning points along this developmental path. As for other aspects of development, awakening and the sleep-wake cycle are also influenced by external factors, both physical and human. Several contributions deal with this topic, in particular focusing on the parent-infant interaction and the influences of culture. Clinical contexts offer an opportunity to show both quantitative and qualitative changes of awakening and arousals in different pathological conditions. Either partial changes of one physiological variable or global and massive changes can be observed. (Series B).

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