Diary from Quarantine – 29 – *How do you sleep?*

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Here in Italy, the decreasing trends in contagions and accesses to hospitals continue. However, the progress seems incredibly slow, which means more days and more nights in lockdown.

This morning I woke up exhausted by dozens of scattered parts of nightmares and weird dreams. My dreams looked like a sort of scary and violent action movie, and I woke up a hundred times with my heart beating fast.

As it is not the first time since the quarantine started, I did some research, and I found out that for thousands – probably millions – of people worldwide night dreams during the pandemic are being affected by fear, stress, isolation, and changes in sleep patterns.
People living in epicenters, obviously, are more likely to have bad dreams.

The [Italian Association of Sleep Medicine](#) is carrying out a research that analyzes the dreams of Italians in lockdown and scientists are noticing that many of them are experiencing nightmares and sleep interruptions (called parasomnias) that closely resemble the symptoms of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD).

In 2009, experts also studied the sleeping patterns of survivors of Abruzzo and Umbria [earthquake](#) and discovered that sleeping disorders and nightmares map mostly overlapped the map of the earthquake.

I am not a scientist and not an expert in sleep medicine. My only little piece of advice to try to help yourself sleep better – obviously other than living a healthy life during the day – is to create a sort of "worry window" for yourself.
The worry window should be a short time during the day, let's say 20 minutes, in which you worry and express your concerns and fears about the pandemic and how society will change, read the news, complain: in a nutshell, get scared.
Once these 20 minutes end, you should try to avoid thinking about the tragedy as much as you can.
I know it is almost impossible, but fear is like the virus itself, the more we isolate it, the better we control it.