

Promoting Healthy Work Environments by Evaluating and Addressing Sleep Habits of Nursing Students

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Disclosure

DR. THOMAS, DR. MCINTOSH AND DR. LAMAR HAVE NO CONFLICT OF INTEREST TO REPORT.

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Objectives

- ▶ Explain current situational context that promotes nursing student sleep deprivation.
- ▶ Discuss consequences of sleep deprivation for nursing students and healthcare environments.
- ▶ Describe participants, methods, and results of a study of nursing students' sleep habits.
- ▶ Analyze nursing student sleep study implications.
- ▶ Develop strategies that address nursing student sleep deprivation and promote healthy work environments



A Snapshot of a Current Nursing Student

- ▶ Full time classes
- ▶ Part- to full-time employment
- ▶ 8-12 hour work shifts
- ▶ 8-12 hour clinical experiences
- ▶ Work + clinical experiences = 7 days/week
- ▶ Working and clinical experiences on all shifts
- ▶ Competing commitments (i.e. academic, employment, social) lead to sleep deprivation



Daily Challenges for Schools of Nursing

- ▶ Increasing competition for clinical sites
- ▶ Increasing use of 12 hour shifts for clinical reduces number of clinical days but provides realistic experience and professional practice transition
- ▶ Demanding didactic and clinical requirements
- ▶ Decreasing clinical day availability



Consequences for Nursing Students

Sleep dysfunction and physical/mental fatigue creates increase risk for:

- ▶ Injury during and/or after clinical and work experiences
- ▶ Increased error rates
- ▶ Motor vehicle accidents
- ▶ Increased stress
- ▶ Academic failure
- ▶ Early burnout
- ▶ Substance abuse
- ▶ Acute and chronic health issues



Study Participants

- ▶ 328 pre-licensure nursing students* were invited to participate
- ▶ 182 agreed to participate
- ▶ 179 completed the study (54%) response rate
- ▶ 157 were 19-24 years old
- ▶ 169 females/10 males
- ▶ 163 were single

(*all students were enrolled in a baccalaureate nursing program)

Methods

- ▶ A 21-item 4-point Likert scale
- ▶ Questionnaire included:
 - Personal sleep habits
 - Number of hours at clinical and work
 - Motor vehicle use after clinical and work
 - Spare time activities
 - Sleep aid use
 - Stimulant use

Results

- ▶ 87% of participants needed 8 or more hours of sleep to feel rested
- ▶ 60% participants only received 5-6 hours of sleep
- ▶ 62% of participants reported 6 hours or less of sleep prior to attending class and 6 hours or less of sleep prior to a nursing clinical experience
- ▶ 98% of participants believed they would perform better academically if they had more sleep



Results Continued

- ▶ 85% of participants admitted to using some form of caffeine to combat sleepiness
- ▶ 31% of participants took sleeping pills to induce sleep
- ▶ 20% of participants took other forms of stimulants to stay awake



Results Continued

- ▶ 99% of participants believed they provided quality care with less than 8 hours of sleep
- ▶ Participants believed they were safe to work in clinical 97% and work settings 96%
- ▶ 85% of student participants believed 12 hour school and work experiences did not negatively impact safety

Implications

- ▶ Schools of nursing and healthcare leaders must collaborate to develop strategies that improve clinical hours and encourage improved student sleep habits
- ▶ Establish safety considerations for those engaged in consecutive 12 hour work shifts and clinical experiences
- ▶ Teach nursing students about the potential negative impact of 12 hour shifts and poor sleep habits on performance and personal health

What Clinical Sites Can Do

- ▶ Limit students' outside employment hours while in clinical courses
- ▶ Nurse (who made an error) talk to students about importance of sleep
- ▶ Quiet room on their break
- ▶ Encourage use of buddy system with students

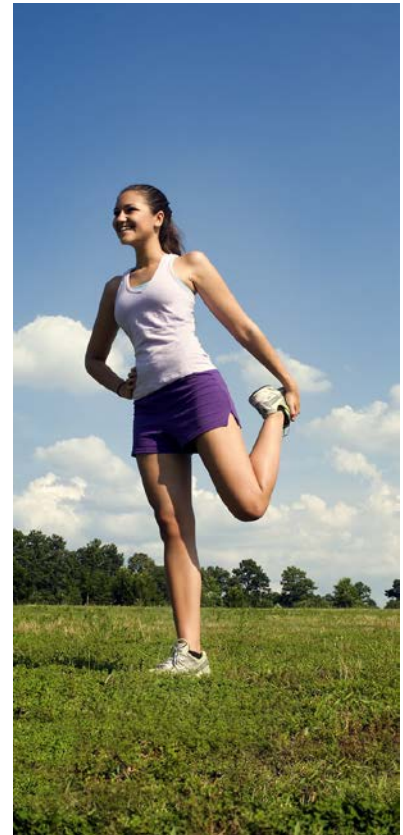


What Schools of Nursing Can Do

- ▶ Admit the Issue
- ▶ Discuss at student events
- ▶ Discuss at faculty meetings
- ▶ Develop & implement a simulation related to sleep
- ▶ Talk honestly to students about effects of sleep deprivation
- ▶ Educate on tips for healthy sleep

What the Student Can Do

- ▶ Create a schedule that includes sufficient time for hours of sleep needed
- ▶ Take action to improve sleep
- ▶ Avoid stimulants and sleep aides
- ▶ Exercise regularly
- ▶ Seek help



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