

Sleep disturbances among medical students: A global perspective

Abstract

Medical students carry a large academic load which could potentially contribute to poor sleep quality above and beyond that already experienced by modern society. In this global literature review of the medical students' sleep experience, we find that poor sleep is not only common among medical students, but its prevalence is also higher than in non-medical students and the general population. Several factors including medical students' attitudes, knowledge of sleep, and academic demands have been identified as causative factors, but other potential mechanisms are incompletely understood. A better understanding about the etiology of sleep problems in medical trainees is essential if we hope to improve the overall quality of medical students' lives, including their academic performance. Sleep selfawareness and general knowledge appear insufficient in many studied cohorts, so increasing education for students might be one beneficial intervention. We conclude that there is ample evidence for a high prevalence of the problem, and research in this area should now expand towards initiatives to improve general sleep education for medical students, identify students at risk, and target them with programs to improve sleep. © 2015 Clinical Sleep Medicine.