G4.4: Predictive Variables of Sleep Disturbances in Older Adults

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Abstract:
Introduction: Sleep disturbances are common complaints of older adults and often interfere with daily function. The purpose of this study was to identify variables that predict low or normal sleep duration (≤ 6 hours; 7-8 hours per night) and lack of ability to carry out certain activities due to feeling sleepy or tired (functional outcomes of sleep) based upon self-reports from older adults.

Method(s): Older adults who participated in the 2003-2005 National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey (NHANES) were used to form the study sample. Logistic regression was used for data analysis.

Results: Older adults who were unmarried, Black, and who reported that they had more difficulties with initiating or maintaining sleep, had statistically significant greater odds (p ≤ .05) of being a “short duration sleeper.” There was a trend toward a statistically significant finding (p = .067) in persons who reported more depressive symptoms as being “short duration sleepers.” Older adults who were more educated, had higher household incomes (≥ $20,000/ year), were Black, reported more depressive symptoms, were more active, complained of difficulties with maintaining or initiating sleep, and complained of “leg jerks” at night were the most likely to report more difficulty with performing everyday functions as related to feeling sleepy or tired. Self-report of amount of physical activity did not predict functional outcomes of sleep. Reported number of hours slept each night did not predict whether or not a person experienced poor functional outcomes as a result of feeling sleepy or tired. There were no differences between age, BMI, number of hours of sleep per night, and reports of more difficulty in function as a result of sleep disturbances between females and males. Unmarried participants slept less each night, took
longer to fall asleep at night, and reported the presence of more depressive symptoms than did the married participants. Persons of Hispanic origin were also 1.6 times more likely to snore at night as compared to White participants.

**Discussion & Conclusions:** Because sleep disturbances are associated with increased incidence of cardiovascular disease, insulin resistance, risk for falling in older adults, and poor function, this is an area where nurses can intervene and make significant contributions to health for older adults. Additional research using objective measures of sleep, such as actigraphy, are warranted in order to quantify these results.

**Abstract History:**
This abstract has not been presented or accepted for presentation in whole or in part at the SNRS or other scientific meeting.

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