Children's Hospital of Philadelphia PolicyLab

Sleep Well!: A Pilot Study of an Education Campaign to Improve Sleep of Socioeconomically Disadvantaged Children.

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STUDY OBJECTIVES: Socioeconomically disadvantaged children are at risk for poor sleep hygiene and increased sleep problems. This pilot study examined the efficacy of Sleep Well!, a parent-based sleep education endeavor, which supplemented an outreach program that provides beds to socioeconomically disadvantaged children.

METHODS: In addition to receiving a bed, 152 children (mean age = 5.95 years, 57.2% boys) were randomly assigned to sleep education (3 messages: bedtime before 21:00; no caffeine; keep electronics out of the bedroom) or control (dental hygiene education) conditions. All education was provided at both the time of scheduling and delivery of a bed to each child. Parent-reported sleep data were collected at baseline and at 4-week follow-up.

RESULTS: Provision of a bed was associated with reduced bedroom electronics and increased parent-reported nighttime sleep duration for all children. However, relative to control children, intervention children showed even greater reductions in electronics (baseline mean = 1.91 items, follow-up mean = 0.85 items) and improvements in sleep duration (baseline mean = 9.75 hours, follow-up mean = 10.19 hours). There was no intervention effect for caffeine consumption or bedtime from baseline to follow-up.

CONCLUSIONS: Providing beds to socioeconomically disadvantaged children resulted in increased sleep duration and decreased use of electronics at bedtime, while the combination of a bed and brief parent sleep education conferred additional sleep benefits. Further study of brief child sleep interventions is warranted, particularly among socioeconomically disadvantaged children who are at risk for sleep problems.

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Authors: Mindell JA, Sedmak R, Boyle JT, Butler R, Williamson AA