

Sleep Quality, Mental Health, and Academic Performance among College Students in South Texas

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ABSTRACT

College life is shaped by a confluence of factors, encompassing heightened academic demands, complex social transitions, and pervasive stress. Amid this dynamic environment, understanding the interplay between sleep quality, mental health, and academic achievement is crucial. **PURPOSE:** We aimed to evaluate sleep quality and mental health among college students and to examine whether sleep quality was associated with their mental health and academic performance. **METHODS:** We analyzed data from 343 college students attending universities in South Texas, with information collected in 2022. To assess the participants' sleep, mental health, and academic performance, we utilized the Pittsburg Sleep Quality Index (PSQI), Depression Anxiety Stress Scale -21 (DASS-21), and grade point average (GPA). Correlation and multivariate regression analyses were employed for data analysis. **RESULTS:** Our analysis of depression scores revealed a spectrum ranging from 0 to 42 (mean=8.88, SD=9.50), with 22.8% exhibiting mild to moderate depression and 11.3% experiencing severe to extremely severe depression. Anxiety scores ranged from 0 to 42, with 24.9% reporting mild to moderate anxiety, while 16.8% experiencing severe to extremely severe anxiety. Stress scores ranged from 0 to 40 (mean \pm SD: 11.23 \pm 8.83), with 20.4% reporting mild to moderate stress and 8.1% having severe to extremely severe stress. The PSQI score ranged from 0 to 18 (mean \pm SD: 6.74 \pm 2.97), and 78.4% were classified as poor sleepers (PSQI \geq 5). The average GPA was 2.77, with a standard deviation of 1.01. Pearson correlation revealed that poor sleep quality was associated with higher scores for depression ($r = .496, p < .001$), anxiety ($r = .321, p < .001$), and stress ($r = .386, p < .001$) on the DASS-21 as well as lower GPA ($r = -.146, p < .05$). In the multivariate analysis adjusting for sociodemographic characteristics, poor sleep quality was significantly associated with increased scores for depression ($b = 1.464, p < .001$), anxiety ($b = .727, p < .001$) and stress ($b = 1.089, p < .001$). Poor sleep quality was strongly associated with decreased academic performance ($b = -.066, p < .01$). **CONCLUSION:** The findings suggest the importance of a holistic approach to supporting college students. This includes addressing sleep quality to improve mental health and academic performance.