Sleep Patterns and Wellbeing: A Comprehensive Analysis of Sleep’s Influence on the Biopsychosocial Aspects in NDD and Mental Health

Stephanie Parker MD, Alyssa Smith
CA START Golden Gate

ABSTRACT
Understanding the intricate relationship between sleep and biopsychosocial aspects in individuals with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities (I/DD) and mental health is crucial for providing effective care and interventions tailored to each person’s unique needs.

Biopsychosocial Background of Sleep
Sleep is a fundamental aspect of human wellbeing, influencing various biopsychosocial factors. Sleep deprivation can lead to numerous side effects, including impaired cognitive function, emotional dysregulation, and decreased physical health. Understanding the specific impact of sleep on individuals with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities (I/DD) and mental health is crucial for providing targeted interventions and support.

Side Effects of Sleep Deprivation:
- Increased heart rate variability
- Risk of heart disease
- Increased reaction time
- Decreased accuracy
- Tremors
- Aches
- Increased irritability
- Cognitive impairment
- Memory lapses or loss
- Impaired moral judgement
- Severe yawning
- Hallucinations
- Symptoms similar to ADHD
- Impaired immune system
- Risk of diabetes Type 2
- Stress

MATERIALS AND METHOD
CA START Golden Gate reviewed records of all active cases currently served through March 2024. Total number of people: 77.

SIRS and record review included:
Referral documentation and START Intake Assessment: Does the person have a diagnosis of a sleep disturbance?

START Emergency Assessment: Is sleep mentioned as a factor contributing to crisis?

FINDINGS
20% of referrals accepted by START report a sleeping disorder at intake.
71.4% of people who have experienced a crisis and have received crisis support from our team, have reported sleep being a factor contributing to crisis.

Biological Questions from the START Emergency Assessment

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Insomnia or difficulty sleeping</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sleep is a sleep disturbance diagnosis at Intake</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>71.4% of the people supported by the Golden Gate team supported by the Golden Gates team supports</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20% of the people supported by the Golden Gate team supports</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Conclusions
The findings of this project underscore the critical importance of addressing sleep patterns and disturbances among people with NDD and mental health conditions. By recognizing and addressing sleep-related issues, implementing evidence-based interventions, and promoting healthy sleep habits we can significantly improve the overall wellbeing and quality of life for this vulnerable population. Further action is needed to understand the complex interplay between sleep and crisis, and to develop targeted interventions tailored to each person’s unique needs.

Next Steps
Creating awareness of the importance of sleep, particularly in the context of people with NDD and mental health conditions, requires a multi-faceted approach. Here are some of the identified next steps the CA START Golden Gate team will explore:
- Training START Team: utilize the MD and CD to enhance knowledge and skills in recognizing sleep disturbances and exploring further screening questions.
- Integrating psychoeducation on the importance of sleep into outreach and system meetings. Emphasizing the importance of recognizing sleep vulnerabilities and the impact to overall wellness.
- Implementing sleep trackers and utilizing Therapeutic Coaching to support the creation of better sleep habits.
- Identifying people/systems of support who would benefit from additional support through Clinical Consult to further understanding the biological vulnerabilities.
- Fostering partnerships with the community to promote sleep awareness and host events such as Clinical Education Teams (CETs) for collaboration and capacity building.

By implementing these strategies, Golden Gate START can create greater awareness of the importance of sleep and promote proactive efforts to address sleep concerns before they lead to crisis in the people we support, ultimately enhancing their overall wellbeing and quality of life.