Implementation of the Sleep Treatment and Education Program for Students (STEPS) in Student Registered Nurse Anesthetists

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Abstract
In the pursuit of graduate level education, student registered nurse anesthetists (SRNAs) undertake curricula requiring an immense investment of time attending didactic classes and clinical training, studying, and completing assignments. The required time commitment combined with the stress accompanying these responsibilities have the potential to leave the SRNA with inadequate time for an optimal amount of sleep, contribute to sleep disturbances, and ultimately result in sleep-related fatigue (SRF). SRF in the SRNA population is a problem because it is imperative for both patient and student safety that SRNAs attain adequate sleep to allow for optimal cognitive function.

This DNP project was a pretest/posttest evaluation of the Sleep Treatment and Education Program for Students (STEPS), a sleep hygiene intervention. This project sought to determine what impact implementation of STEPS has on SRNA sleep-related behaviors, sleep quality, and incidence of SRF, as measured by the Pittsburgh Sleep Quality Index (PSQI). One of three SRNA class cohort was randomly assigned to the control group. As a pretest, the SRNA participants were administered the PSQI. Following the pretest PSQI, the treatment group received the intervention. Posttest reevaluation using the PSQI was conducted one month later in both groups. Data analysis revealed that the implementation of STEPS had no statistically significant effect on SRNA sleep-related behaviors and sleep quality. Though this intervention did not show statistically significant, some small overall improvements were seen in examining the raw data. Further, PSQI scores indicated only 25% of the second-year and third-year SRNAs had good sleep quality; 75% had poor sleep quality.