

Sleep and Health Challenges: Addressing Unmet Needs of a Major Public Health Issue

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Abstract

Sleep is a major health determinant. Sleep is an essential component of the physical, cognitive, and emotional development of children and adolescents. In childhood, sufficient and regular sleep supports learning, concentration, and emotional balance. In adults, sleep is critical for brain, cardiovascular and metabolic functioning. Sleep deprivation has been evidenced as being associated with obesity, hypertension and cardiovascular diseases. Unhealthy sleep behaviors have been evidenced as important risk factors for cardiovascular health. Short or long sleep duration, late chronotype and insomnia are associated with increased cardiovascular risk. Both sleep-disordered breathing and insomnia are major health issues owing to their prevalence and associated comorbidities. Thus, there are diagnostic issues and interventional challenges needing to be addressed. This paper reviews the evidence, as well as the interactions with two other major health determinants i.e. physical activity and nutrition.

Keywords

Public health, Sleep, sleep deprivation, sleep disorders.