EFFECTS OF AN EMAIL DELIVERED BEHAVIORAL SLEEP INTERVENTION ON COLLEGE STUDENT SLEEP QUALITY

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Purpose: Sleep is an important part of maintaining a healthy lifestyle. Due to high demands and increased stress, college students are at risk for developing sleep related problems. Cognitive behavioral therapies (CBT) are effective in reducing sleep problems; however they can be difficult to access for busy students. This project uses 8 CBT lessons delivered to students via e-mail. We hypothesize this accessible intervention will improve sleep reports.

Methods: The effects of an 8-week emailed CBT intervention (Refresh) are measured at baseline and 8 and 12 weeks post baseline. The participants are full time (12 credit hours) undergraduate students at The University of Texas. Students are randomly assigned to the Sleep group or Body Image group (control). We will use the Insomnia Severity Index (ISI) and two subscales of the PROMIS to assess sleep. Recruitment is ongoing.

Findings: 63 students have enrolled and 40 have completed the intervention period. Students are primarily Caucasian (60%) and Latino (25%), female (90%), living on or near campus (96%) with 1 roommate (73%), and in their first two years of college (59%). At baseline they reported moderate insomnia levels (ISI = 9; sd4.1), sleep disturbances (PROMIS-SD = 21; sd6), and sleep related impairment (PROMIS-SI = 22; sd6). Sleep group students report significant improvement on all three sleep measures at the p=.000 level. The control (body image) group did not show the same level of improvement over time.

Conclusions: The students appear to benefit from the email delivered CBT intervention (Refresh) at least at immediate post-intervention measurement. We will assess the sustained effects of these lessons one-month post-intervention. If the improvements are sustained over time, this may prove to be a cost efficient and time effective way to provide students with important lifestyle modification information.

Acknowledgement: This project was supported in part by an Undergraduate Research Fellowship from The University of Texas at Austin Office of Research.