Sleep Information Platforms

College Student Preferences for Sleep Promotion Information Delivery Platforms

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Abstract

**Purpose:** Information about the impact sleep deprivation can have on students success in college is critical. However, traditional methods of disseminating health information (e.g. posters) are not as effective for this population. College students are continuously searching for electronic ways to stay connected and up to date about information that they find important. This study describes student use of and preferences for social media platforms to obtain health information.

**Methods:** This descriptive-cross-sectional study investigated college student use of and preferences for social media platforms for health information delivery. Full-time graduate and undergraduate students at the University of Texas at Austin were invited to participate. An online survey was used to measure student sleep (PROMIS scales), academic performance (Sleep in School), and use of and preference for social media platforms as a source of health information (investigator developed scale).

**Findings:** 149 students completed the survey. Students are primarily female (84.5%), Caucasian (62.7%), and in their first two years of college (77.5%). Students reported moderate sleep disturbance and impairment. Additionally, students reported moderate negative impact of sleep on their academic performance (e.g. falling asleep in class). Finally, 93% of participants used their smart phone to access the Internet at least daily. Participants accessed health information on Facebook (46%), Pinterest (35%), Instagram (30%), and Twitter (19%). Gender and ethnic differences were noted regarding usage of these platforms.

**Conclusions:** College students are at increased risk for sleep deprivation. Although, many are unaware of the negative impact sleep deprivation can have on their everyday lives and success in college. Disseminating this information to an increasingly ‘plugged in’ population may be best done through social media platforms. This study found college students frequently use social media platforms to obtain health information. It is a natural transition to offer sleep information this way as well.

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