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Impact of Sleep on Stuttering

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Introduction: The relationship between stuttering and sleep disorders seems to be bidirectional, since stutterers are compromised by negative self-perception, anxiety, and depression that can lead to sleep problems, on the other hand, sleep disorders can result in decreased motivation and concentration, memory deficit, daytime sleepiness, mood swings, a decline in immunity, and worsening of motor alterations that highlight the stuttering picture. This negative feedback between sleep disorders and the pathological picture, when identified, can be considered in therapeutic planning, and its treatment results in behavioral improvement.

Aim: The present study aims to investigate objective characteristics of the sleep-wake cycle in children with stuttering using actigraphy and their relationship with the degree of severity.

Methods: Twenty individuals of both genders, aged 9 to 11 years, participated in the study. One group consisted of 10 children with stuttering (CWS) and the comparative group consisted of 10 children without stuttering (CWNS). All children were evaluated for the presence of sleep disorders, the Sleep Disorders Scale for Children - SDSC, and objective parameters of the sleep-wake cycle by actigraphy. The CWS group was also evaluated for speech fluency and stuttering severity.

Results: Regarding the indication of sleep disorders, 60% of the CWS group and 30% of the CWNS had a latency time to start to sleep longer than acceptable, and 40% of the CWS group had indications of sleep disorders, the most frequent being SDS found in 40%, DIMS in 20% and DTSV in 10% of the subjects. The CWS group had higher mean scores than the CWNS group in DTSV and Total Score. Analysis by actigraphy showed that the CWS showed higher mean scores than the CWNS in the Time to Bed. There was a correlation between total sleep time and the stuttering

severity parameters: % disfluency typical of stuttering (% DTG) and total score, and between time in bed and % DTG.

Conclusions: The actigraphy data confirmed that the group of individuals with stuttering had a longer sleep latency time. The hypothesis that sleep parameters were related, possibly bidirectional, to parameters of stuttering severity was also confirmed.

Keywords

sleep – stuttering – evaluation study – actigraphy



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