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Waking Up to Sleep Medicine Education

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“WAKING UP TO SLEEP MEDICINE EDUCATION”
Bhuvana Muthuswamy MD and Elizabeth Nelson MD

Background:

Sleep disorders are an important cause of morbidity among our population with billions of dollars spent on direct and indirect costs attributed to sleep disorders. In spite of rising prevalence and morbidity, surveys have shown inadequate education in sleep medicine at all levels at medical school. According to national sleep disorders research plan data, in 1990 about 37 % of medical schools did not offer any sleep education and of the schools which offered it, the average time devoted to sleep medicine was about 2 hours. Sleep disorders have found to be uniformly under diagnosed in primary care settings.

Common sleep disorders include Insomnia, OSA, Narcolepsy and RLS. Prevalence of insomnia is around 10%-30 %, sleep apnea affects about 12 million adults of which about half are not diagnosed, prevalence of RLS around 10-15 % of population and about 250,000 likely to suffer from narcolepsy half of whom are not diagnosed.

Sleep histories are uncommonly obtained by residents and physicians alike, a study in 2005 showed self reported knowledge deficits in primary care physicians.

Pilot Study:

A pilot study was conducted. A pretest on common sleep disorders given to 6 interns Baylor General Medicine clinic rotation had an average pretest score of about 55% clearly indicating the need for increased sleep medicine education. We explored ways to overcome these deficits with a self directed vs. faculty directed learning module. An informal sleep curriculum during the month increased scores on average by 21%. Slightly more in the faculty directed group.

Next Steps:

A web based module on common sleep disorders for residents and for medical students to integrate sleep medicine into their four year medical school curriculum at Baylor College of Medicine.