P03-227

PERSONALITY TRAITS AND SLEEP PATTERNS/PROBLEMS IN MEDICAL STUDENTS

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Aim: This study examines the relationship between the personality traits of Neuroticism and Extroversion and sleep patterns and others sleep behaviours in medical students.

Method: Neuroticism and Extroversion were assessed using the Portuguese version of the Eysenck Personality Inventory. Sleep was assessed with a self-response questionnaire covering a wide range of sleep-wake habits and difficulties. A factor analysis with varimax rotation was performed with seventeen items of the questionnaire and four factors were extracted: Sleep Disturbance, Sleep Timing, Insufficient Sleep and Dreams/Nightmares. A total of 203 third year medical students (127 females, 62.6%) mean age 20.01 (SD=1.09; Range=18-24) participated in the study.

Results: There were no significant gender differences in Neuroticism and Extroversion mean scores (Neuroticism: $p=.454$; Extroversion: $p=.891$). Extroversion was significantly correlated with Sleep Timing ($p=.000$), whereasthere was a trend for Neuroticism to be associated with Sleep Disturbance ($p=.095$). Concerning the relationship of Neuroticism and Extroversion mean scores with other Sleep problems, Neuroticism was found associated with concentration difficulties in the morning ($p=.006$), inadequate sleep duration ($p=.001$), sleep problems ($p=.012$), and use of sleep medication ($p=.052$). No significant associations were found with Extroversion.

Conclusion: Neuroticism was significantly associated with sleep problems, use of sleep medication, inadequate sleep duration, and concentration difficulties in the morning. Extroversion was correlated only with later Sleep Timing.