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Review to the research articles:

1. Construction of a telephone interview to assess the relationship between mood and sleep in adolescence

Authors: Salvatore Settineri, Antongiulio Vitetta, Carmela Mento, Giusy Fanara, Rosalia Silvestri, Filippo Tati, Rosario Grugno, Francesco Cordici, Fabio Conte, Giovanni Polimeni, Lara Gitto, Placido Bramanti

Neurological Sciences

Neurol Sci (2010) 31:459–465

2. Mood and Sleep Problems in Adolescents and Young Adults: An Econometric Analysis

Authors: Salvatore Settineri, Lara Gitto, Fabio Conte, Giusy Fanara, Domenico Mallamace, Carmela Mento, Rosalia Silvestri, Filippo Tati, Rocco Zoccali, Francesco Cordici, Rosario Grugno, Giovanni Polimeni, Antongiulio Vitetta, Placido Bramanti

The Journal of Mental Health Policy and Economics

J Ment Health Policy Econ (2012) 15, 23-31

The two research articles “Construction of a telephone interview to assess the relationship between mood and sleep in adolescence”, published on *Neurological Sciences* (2010) and “Mood and Sleep Problems in Adolescents and Young Adults: An Econometric Analysis”, published on *The Journal of Mental Health Economics and Policy* (2012), have been developed within a wider project aimed at analyzing the correlation between sleep habits and affective symptoms for young people.

The topic is particularly relevant, as sleep related problems affect about 25-40% of children and adolescents and their consequences are not often fully considered. It is well known how sleep patterns characterised by late bedtimes, insomnia and excessive daytime sleepiness are related with poorer school performance, drowsiness, physical tiredness. Another consequence of bad sleep habits is the probability of psychiatric disorders, that has been estimated in several studies carried out mainly in foreign countries.

These studies represent a novelty, because they show the correlation between mood and sleep on a sample of adolescents living in two Regions of Southern Italy, while there are no many analyses carried out in Italy. Many adolescents have been included in the study, while, in other works, observations concern often less than 1,000 subjects.

Data collection was based on the administration of a specific questionnaire especially developed to check the presence of affective symptoms and sleep problems, and then validated through telephone interviews. Moreover, the questionnaire succeeded in the objective to check young people’s perception of their psychological status.

Overall, the two studies showed how there is a correlation between sleep and affective symptoms; they outlined the main critical factors to detect the simultaneous presence of bad sleeping habits and mood disorders and suggested the opportunity to plan specific support programs in order to prevent future complications for young people’s mental health.

The first of the two studies was aimed at describing the construction of the questionnaire on affective symptoms and sleep habits. It can be regarded as a pilot study, that showed the appropriateness of the tool developed. The phase of data collection last more than one year: approximately 4,000 of the people who were contacted by phone call with adolescent children agreed to participate in the survey; 529 adolescents were enrolled for the pilot study. Adolescents were then asked to respond anonymously to 12 questions related to affective factors and quality of sleep. A factorial analysis was carried out to explore the structure of the questionnaire according to the two

factors “affective symptoms” and “quality of sleep”.

Having validated the questionnaire, it was clear how it was a powerful instrument, to apply in wider analyses, likely to consider aspects related to health policy and health economics too. In fact, an early detection of depressive symptoms may help to prevent future worsening of people’s health conditions, and increasing costs for drugs as antidepressants and psychological support.

The second study was carried out on a wider population; it ran an econometric analysis to verify the joint correlation between sleep habits and affective symptoms.

A recursive bivariate probit model was employed. This method allowed to take into account two dependent variables: the presence of daytime sleepiness, to be meant as a proxy variable for bad sleep habits and the presence of sadness, to be meant as a proxy for affective symptoms. The econometric model considered the relationship between the two variables, presuming that one may also influence the other.

The analysis has been carried out on a sample of 2,005 adolescents, on 4,000 interviewed. Results showed a positive correlation between sadness and daytime sleepiness. The estimated joint probability between the two dependent variables went from 5,5%, when a wider notion of affective symptoms was adopted, to 9% when frequency and intensity of sadness were considered as predictors for affective symptoms; some gender differences were found, as girls present a higher probability to experience both problems.

Some limitations of the studies may relate to the circumstance that the interviews have been done in the years 2003-2004; a replica of the analysis would outline if this evidence is still the same or, if in the meanwhile, changes in habits and behaviour intervened modifying substantially this pattern. Nowadays the feasibility of telephone interviews might be questionable, given that new Italian laws on privacy and parental consensus would make it more difficult to realize telephone interviews on such a wide number of young people. It would be interesting to replicate the analysis through face-to-face interviews or internet surveys.

The implications for health care provision are clear: the early detection of affective symptoms in adolescents may presumably lead to a diminished use of antidepressants, improvements in learning abilities and school results, together with a strengthening of personal motivations

An indication for health policy concerns the opportunity to plan counseling and educational programs directed towards those adolescents declaring bad sleep habits, in order to avoid further complications of their mental health.

The study published on *The Journal of Mental Health Economics and Policy* has been presented at some international conferences, reporting a considerable appreciation and interest from the audience.

It was presented as oral communication at the XXXIII Jornadas de Economía de la Salud, that took place in Santander from June 19th to 21st, 2013. Recently, it has been selected and presented as oral communication at the 9th World Conference on Health Economics held in Sydney from July 8th to July 11th, 2013.

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