SLEEP DISTURBANCES IN PRESCHOOL CHILDREN WITH AUTISM SPECTRUM DISORDER AT A MALAYSIAN TERTIARY HOSPITAL

1Ho Wai Koo, 2Juriza Ismail, 2Wai Wai Yang. 1Ministry of Health Malaysia; 2Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia

Background Children with autism spectrum disorder (ASD) have a myriad of associated health problems which affect their overall quality of life. These include sleep disturbances, which may have been under-recognised previously. Recent research have indicated that children with ASD have more sleep problems compared to their typically-developing peers. However, there is limited information regarding the prevalence of sleep problems among preschool children with ASD. The Sleep Disturbance Scale for Children (SDSC) was originally validated on a sample of healthy children 6–16 years old, but it has been proven to have a good level of internal consistency (Cronbach’s alpha: 0.83) for preschool children between the ages of 3–6 years old. This questionnaire has also been validated in the Malaysian children population in previous studies.

Objectives This study aims to determine the prevalence of sleep problems and associated factors in a group of Malaysian preschool children between the age 3 and 6 years old, with autistic spectrum disorder (ASD) diagnosed as per DSM-5.

Methods Patients who fulfilled the inclusion criteria were recruited from the Child Development Clinic, Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia Medical Centre (UKMMC). Demographic data was obtained and the Sleep Disturbances Scale for Children (SDSC) questionnaire was completed by the main caregiver. Logistic regression analysis was used to determine factors related to higher total SDSC scores.

Results A total of 56 preschool children were recruited (48 boys) with a median age of 5 years (IQR = 9 months). Twenty-one of them (37.5%) obtained a pathological score for at least one subtype of sleep disturbances on the SDSC with eleven children (19.6%) scoring high for overall sleep disturbances. For each sleep disturbance subtype; DIMS 23 (41.1%), PAR 10 (18%), SBD 2 (3.6%), DOES 17 (30.4%), DA 8 (14.3%), NRS 6 (10.7) while no participants achieved pathological score for SHY. Majority of them had insufficient night sleep duration of less than 8 hours (35.7%) and prolonged sleep latency beyond 30 minutes after bedtime (46.4%). A significant proportion of the preschoolers with ASD had co-morbidities (39.3%) in which more than a quarter (26.8%) had attention-deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD). The practice of co-sleeping was common in a majority of the households (94.6%). Using logistic regression analysis, four factors were significantly associated with higher total SDSC scores; female gender (p = 0.032), insufficient sleep length (p < 0.001), prolonged sleep latency (p = 0.021) and the practice of co-sleeping (p <0.001).

Conclusions Sleep disturbances are prevalent in Malaysian preschool children with ASD, especially DIMS. Female gender, insufficient sleep length, prolonged sleep latency and household practice of co-sleeping were found to be significant factors associated with sleep disturbances. Evaluation of sleep problems should form part of the comprehensive care of preschool children with ASD. Individuals at risk for sleep problems could then be directed to appropriate avenues for support and therapy.

Abbreviations: DA, disorders of arousal; DIMS, disorders of initiating and maintaining sleep; DOES, disorders of excessive somnolence; NRS, nonrestorative sleep; PAR, parasomnias; SBD, sleep breathing disorders; SDSC, Sleep Disturbance Scale for Children; SHY, sleep hyperhidrosis.

British Association for Community Child Health

SLEEP DISTURBANCES IN PRESCHOOL CHILDREN WITH AUTISM SPECTRUM DISORDER AT A MALAYSIAN TERTIARY HOSPITAL

1Ho Wai Koo, 2Juriza Ismail, 2Wai Wai Yang. 1Ministry of Health Malaysia; 2Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia

Background Autistic Spectrum Disorder (ASD) is a neurodevelopmental condition that affects the social relationships, communication and behavior of children. The prevalence of ASD in Malaysia is reported to be higher among school-aged children with autism spectrum disorder (ASD). The condition can present with a wide range of symptoms, including sleep disturbances, which can significantly impact the child’s quality of life and overall outcomes. Sleep disturbances are common in children with ASD, with findings indicating that they may experience difficulties with initiating and maintaining sleep, restless sleep, and early morning wake-up time.

Objectives The primary objective of this study was to determine the prevalence of sleep disturbances in preschool children with ASD. The secondary objectives were to identify factors associated with sleep disturbances and to compare the sleep patterns of children with ASD to those of typically-developing children.

Methods This was a cross-sectional study conducted in a tertiary hospital in Malaysia. A total of 56 children between the ages of 3 and 6 years were recruited, with 48 boys and 8 girls. The inclusion criteria were children diagnosed with ASD according to DSM-5 criteria and aged between 3 and 6 years. A control group of typically-developing children aged 3 to 6 years was also recruited from a local preschool. The Sleep Disturbance Scale for Children (SDSC) was used to assess sleep disturbances. Logistic regression analysis was performed to identify factors associated with sleep disturbances.

Results A total of 56 children with ASD were recruited, with a median age of 5 years (IQR = 9 months). Twenty-one of them (37.5%) obtained a pathological score for at least one subtype of sleep disturbances on the SDSC. The most common sleep disturbances were inadequate cooling (8% vs. 8%) and insufficient sleep length (p = 0.021). Logistic regression analysis revealed that female gender (p = 0.021) and the practice of co-sleeping (p <0.001) were significant factors associated with sleep disturbances.

Conclusions Sleep disturbances are prevalent in preschool children with ASD, with findings indicating that they may experience difficulties with initiating and maintaining sleep, restless sleep, and early morning wake-up time. Factors such as female gender and co-sleeping were significantly associated with sleep disturbances. These findings highlight the need for targeted interventions to address sleep disturbances in children with ASD to improve their overall quality of life.

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British Association of General Paediatrics

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Young People’s Health Special Interest Group

1055 BRINGING OUR HEEADSSS TOGETHER - PRIORITISING THE VOICES OF CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

Paediatric Research Across the Midlands (PRAM) Network.


Background Children and young people (CYP) are increasingly attending acute paediatric services due to mental health difficulties. 50% of all mental health problems are established by 14 years of age and 75% by 24 years. Underinvestment in mental health has been a longstanding concern, amplified by the COVID-19 pandemic through extra stress caused by prolonged school closures, social isolation and a lack of access to usual support services.

In 2020, the Royal College of Paediatrics and Child Health highlighted that suicide is now the leading cause of death in England and Wales for children aged 5–19 years, emphasising the need to prioritise and improve mental health. Paediatricians must develop the knowledge and skills to identify, support and make appropriate referrals for common mental health problems. HEEADSSS is a well-known psychosocial screening tool with eight domains, used to identify potential or actual harm.

Objectives Establish whether CYP within the West Midlands, UK are receiving adequate psychosocial assessments on hospital admission and whether healthcare professionals are signposting to relevant services.

The primary outcome was the percentage of CYP with documented evidence of being offered a HEEADSSS assessment.

Methods A regional prospective audit across nine hospitals was performed for three days per week from 4st -31st January 2021. A standardised proforma was used to gather information from medical records of all CYP aged ≥12 years admitted to paediatric wards. Pooled data were analysed using Microsoft Excel.

Results 231 patients were included. The median age was 14 years old (range 12–17 years). 163(71%) were female. 202 (87%) had no known communication difficulties. 53(23%) were known to CAMHS and 43(19%) to social care. 78/231 (34%) were admitted with mental health as the presenting complaint. 35/231(15%) were documented to be given the opportunity to be spoken to alone; 29(82%) accepted.