
Talk on Tuesday, 9. December 2025***Start: 10:15 till 11.30 Uhr******in HS 424******The talk will be presented in English***

Sleep health in women's life span: a focus on peripartum

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Sleep health is defined as a continuous multidimensional construct ranging from good sleep health to dysfunctional sleep. It is understood through distinct, but related, dimensions of sleep-wake pattern, including: (i) satisfaction with sleep; (ii) alertness; (iii) sleep timing; (iv) sleep efficiency; and (v) sleep duration. The concept of sleep health provides a positive holistic framing of multiple sleep characteristics, which is supposed to be helpful for improving the recognition of subclinical conditions and strengthening preventive actions. Nevertheless, so far we know little about possible gender and age differences in sleep health patterns.

We have developed and validated a 17 item questionnaire measuring the 5 sleep health dimensions. First analyses indicate a slightly worse self-report of sleep health in women compared to men, considering the adult (18-45 yrs.) and adolescent (14-21 yrs.) population, but not in children (9-10 yrs.) or preadolescents (11-14 yrs.). Furthermore, insomnia symptoms and disorder is frequently observed with higher prevalence in women compared to men, from puberty up to elderly. Interestingly, other sleep disorders, such as delayed sleep phase, are more commonly observed in male than female adolescents/young adults. Future research should focus on longitudinal pathways explaining how biological, psychological and socio-cultural factors interact in defining possible different risk health patterns for boys and girls from childhood to adulthood.

With respect to gender differences in the lifespan, we focused on sleep health and insomnia during the peripartum. In this life period, changes in sleep are reported by 66 to 97% of women. Most common problems during all three trimesters include short sleep duration, poor sleep quality, conditions of sleep loss, and insomnia. Sleep health dimensions follow particular changes during pregnancy, such as a shift to an earlier sleep phase, and an increase in fatigue and sleepiness during the day. Thirty-one women within the 20th week of pregnancy have been enrolled in a still on-going longitudinal study evaluating sleep and wellbeing through subjective and physiological measures up to 6-months post-partum. Preliminary data will be discussed.