An exploration of the sleep needs, experiences and perspectives of adolescents who have been excluded from mainstream education

Dr Josie Bainton
Overview

■ Introduction: Adolescent sleep and rationale for study

■ Methods: Qualitative exploration using thematic analysis

■ Results: Contextual data and themes

■ Discussion: Links to the literature, implications for research and practice

■ Questions from the audience
Introduction
What is sleep?

- Fundamental yet mysterious
- Reduced responsiveness and behaviours
- Regulation: circadian rhythms & homeostatic pressure
- Inter- & intra-individual variability
- Neural function
The significance of adolescent sleep: What we know so far

- Adolescents are a distinct population
- Adolescents are not getting enough sleep
- Sleep is associated with academic and wellbeing outcomes
- Influencing adolescent sleep effectively is difficult
Sleep
Quantity, quality, timing

Variables that might be affected by sleep e.g. executive functioning

Variables that might affect and be affected by sleep e.g. anxiety

Variables that might affect sleep e.g. peer victimisation

Educational Psychologists can use all of this information to understand factors that may be supporting or hindering a young person’s successful development as well as to inform strategies to bring about improvements for the young person.
An exploration of the sleep needs, experiences and perspectives of adolescents who have been excluded from mainstream education
Study population & design

- Adolescents excluded from mainstream education share characteristics with those who have poor sleep
  - Social, emotional and mental health difficulties
  - Socioeconomic status (SES)

- Similar previous studies
  - Qualitative: Typically developing adolescents from mid to high SES backgrounds
  - Quantitative: children and young people of lower SES
  - College and university students
Rationale

- Benefits of exploring adolescent viewpoints in rich detail about sleep
- Potential to explore mediating factors between sleep and risk of exclusion
- To support education professionals to effectively collaborate with adolescents
- To increase EP understanding of sleep factors relating to their practice
Methods
Research question

- What are the **experiences** and **perspectives** of adolescents who have been excluded from mainstream education with regard to:
  - *The impact of sleep on their day-to-day lives?*
  - *The barriers and facilitators for their sleep?*
  - *What people around them (peers, adults) communicate about sleep?*
  - *Whether they are content with the amount of sleep they get?*
  - *Whether they have tried to improve their sleep?*
Data collection & analysis

**Interviews**
- Semi-structured
- Audio recorded & transcribed
- Analysed using Braun & Clarke’s **Thematic Analysis**

**Questionnaires**
- Self-report
- Typical sleep duration (school nights and non-school nights)
- Symptoms of inadequate sleep
- Sleep hygiene behaviours
Participants

- Nine participants (one female)
- Aged 11 – 15 years
- Two settings: Pupil referral unit & special school for children and young people with SEMH needs
- All young people described as having been excluded from mainstream education
Results
## Self-report usual sleep and wake times

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>School Night Sleep Time</th>
<th>School Day Wake Time</th>
<th>Weekend Night Sleep Time</th>
<th>Weekend Day Wake Time</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>P1</strong></td>
<td>10.00pm</td>
<td>8.00am</td>
<td>11.00pm</td>
<td>10.30am</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>P2</strong></td>
<td>11.30pm</td>
<td>7.45am</td>
<td>1.00am</td>
<td>10.30am</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>P3</strong></td>
<td>10.30pm</td>
<td>7.45am</td>
<td>1.00am</td>
<td>9.00am</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>P4</strong></td>
<td>12.00am</td>
<td>7.30am</td>
<td>12.00am</td>
<td>8.00am</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>P5</strong></td>
<td>1.00am</td>
<td>8.00am</td>
<td>2.00am</td>
<td>11.00am</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>P7</strong></td>
<td>2.00am</td>
<td>8.00am</td>
<td>5.00am</td>
<td>3.30pm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>P8</strong></td>
<td>10.30pm</td>
<td>7.00am</td>
<td>12.30am</td>
<td>12.30pm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>P9</strong></td>
<td>11.30pm</td>
<td>8.00am</td>
<td>11.00pm</td>
<td>3.00pm</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note. School nights are those nights when the young person has school the next day and weekend nights are those nights when the young person does not have school the next day.*
Contextual information: ASHSr, CRSQ & PDSS scores

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Total CSRQ</th>
<th>PDSS</th>
<th>Total ASHSr</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>P1</td>
<td>45*</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>2.7†</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P2</td>
<td>53**</td>
<td>24*</td>
<td>3.7†</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P4</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>3.5†</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P5</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>3.3†</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P7</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>3.6†</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P8</td>
<td>54**</td>
<td>28**</td>
<td>4.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P9</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>2.3†</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Score is one standard deviation above the mean (Devald-Kaufman).
Figure 3.3. Total CSRQ total scores for each participant with dashed lines indicating high sensitivity (28), balanced (40) and high specificity (51) cut-offs (Dewald-Kaufmann et al., 2018).
Theme: My sleep and how I feel about it

- Teenage sleep patterns
- Sleep difficulties
- Mixed views about changing my sleep
- I am different
- Other’s views about my sleep

I keep waking up in the middle of the night ... happening for like ages now ... since, about, since I left my old school

Just to tell you I’ve um went to bed about five in the morning today

I wish I could, I wish if like, I wish if like I snap my fingers [snaps fingers] I could go to sleep

Probably like my teachers cos where I’m always moody, right, they probably think that I’m moody cos I haven’t got enough sleep

Cos they are getting their full sleep, I’m not ... They’re concentrating, I wouldn’t be

It’s, I just can’t sleep
Theme: Beliefs and perceptions about sleep

- Sleep is linked to success and wellbeing
  - School performance and cognitive factors
  - Interpersonal relationships and emotions
  - Sleep is needed for physical energy
- What people know and how they know it

Oh what helps is just turn the lights off.

Maybe something happened, like something banged and I woked up or something.

Um, what I like is not really happy, I ain’t happy, I ain’t joyful.

I think I get exhausted, I get annoyed, I get easily angry.

Counting sheep ... Mmm. But that doesn’t work.

He probably learned about it in school ... High school.

Gotta be awake, you gotta be alive to go to school, otherwise your brain doesn’t function properly.
Theme: Knowledge, agency & self-efficacy

- Limited knowledge of sleep factors
- Limited control or influence
- Sleep is determined by external demands
- Other people don’t understand me

I don’t know. I don’t, I don’t know

I had a drink and went back to bed
[interviewer asks what the drink was] energy drink

I keep waking up in the middle of the night ... like just randomly

Um it’s because I, I don’t get full, my full sleep on the weekdays so I just ... the sleep just builds up in me and when it’s the weekend just, just relaxing

Uh huh I don’t tell my dad cos he, if he did know he would like be really angry with me

It’s not my fault I can’t get out of bed

They think I go to sleep at nine ... [laughs]
Theme: Technology plays a significant role in my life

- Technology facilitates my sleep
- Technology hinders my sleep

It doesn’t really affect me cos like, like, if I can’t sleep I’ll just go on my phone ... and then just wait until I fall asleep

If I didn’t have the internet, or technology, I would be sleeping at like twelve

Stay on the Xbox all night ... until about six in the morning ... playing games

You just keep scrolling down for like hours ... And you like, like ten minutes later like, what, what was I supposed to do? ... When the noti- notifications just like pops up on facebook, I just go on the facebook app, go on the notifications just like, like tick it off but then there’s a video I just watch it, then I’m watching another video, and then it just ... It’s, it’s so bad

If I didn’t have the internet, or technology, I would be sleeping at like twelve
My family affect my sleep

Then I went home to my mum and my mum was like “Yeah you just had a panic attack”

But then, then say my little brother will come in and wake me up at like 10 o’clock, like wanting to play a game or something

My mum will like wake, wake me up and I just get on with life

The baby wakes me up every night

My brother that sleeps in the same bed and keeps kicking me
Discussion
Links to the literature

- Developmental changes during adolescence
- School schedule
- Social jetlag
- Technology
- Unrealistic views of sleep experiences
- Environmental factors
Implications

- Lack of sleep education in schools
- What matters to the young people
- Consider people and environmental factors outside of school – holistic picture
- Questionnaires and discussion schedules for EPs
- Lack of UK research about adolescent sleep needs
SLEEPING IS MY SUPERPOWER!

Questions
Questions

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Adolescent Sleep: Needs, Perspectives and Experiences

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