The Benefits of Sleep During Hospitalization: A Survey to Determine the Utility of Quiet Hours on a Med-Surg Floor

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BACKGROUND

Florence Nightingale said, “Unnecessary noise is the cruellest absence of care.” During inpatient hospitalizations, frequent awakenings and a high level of ambient noise prevent restful sleep in many patients. Interventions in sleep are detrimental not only to patient satisfaction, but to patient health.

Sleep deficit is linked to:
- Increased serum cortisol
- Decreased immune response
- Endocrine changes
- Gastrointestinal changes
- Hypertension
- Difficulty with ventilator weaning
- Poor glucose control
- Increased prevalence of falls
- Tachycardia
- Decreased insulin sensitivity

Awakenings are inevitable for the health and safety of patients; however, many hospitals have improved patient sleep quality by implementing 2-3 hour periods devoted to patient rest. These periods, called “quiet hours,” are a specified time during which noise levels are restricted and non-urgent interruptions are prohibited. In prior studies, implementation of quiet hours has been linked to improved patient sleep, as well as improved patient satisfaction and increased HCAHPS scores in the “always quiet at night” category.

What are quiet hours?
- Limited interruptions
- Non-urgent studies rescheduled
- Visitation limited
- Lights dimmed
- Noise levels reduced
- Sleep/relaxation encouraged

PROBLEM STATEMENT

Poor quality of sleep for hospitalized patients results in low patient satisfaction scores and adverse health outcomes.

OBJECTIVE (S) OR GOAL(S)
- To determine the quality of sleep of a sample of patients representing three med-surg units, and the frequent causes of poor patient sleep quality on those units
- To determine the patient perception of a quiet hours policy
- To improve awareness of the importance of healthy sleep patterns during hospitalization.

METHODS

- Sleep quality data was collected from a total of 22 patients on a medical/surgical, progressive step down, and neurological unit.
- Unit nurse managers were informed about the study and granted permission to conduct research.
- Participants were randomly selected, but must have spent at least one night in the hospital to be included in the study.
- A questionnaire was developed and then utilized by all four researchers to verbally question patients and collect data.

RESULTS

64% of patients reported that the implementation of quiet hours would be beneficial during hospitalization.

Of the 22 patients surveyed, 0 reported sleeping well in the hospital.
14 of the patients reported they had difficulty sleeping, or they did not sleep at all.

The 3 top variables affecting sleep were pain, noise, and assessments/interruptions.
50% of patients reported that assessments and interruptions were the cause of poor sleep.

REFERENCES


