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Understanding Sleep-Related Behaviours In Indian Elderly Women: An Exploratory Study

Pallavi Bhat

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UNDERSTANDING SLEEP-RELATED BEHAVIOURS IN INDIAN ELDERLY WOMEN: AN EXPLORATORY STUDY

Abstract

Sleep disturbances are one of the common problems faced by elderly. Available literature suggests that women suffer more commonly with sleep disturbances as compared to men. Although, sleep occupation is significant for the health and functioning of the elderly, there is limited research on sleep-related behaviors and sleep disturbance in elderly in India. Hence, a qualitative phenomenological study was conducted to understand sleep-related behaviors in Indian elderly women. Eight participants were recruited from the community of Udupi. In-depth semi-structured interviews were conducted either in-person or telephonically. Thematic analysis of the interview was done, and two themes emerged: sleep-related beliefs and practices, and sleep disturbances in elderly women. The study found that elderly women valued sleep and brings forth supportive and non-supportive sleep-related behaviours of Indian elderly women. Although they experienced sleep disturbances, they did not consider it as a salient health concern. The results also identified several internal and external factors causing sleep disturbance in elderly women. and strategies they used to manage sleep disturbances. The study findings highlight the need for awareness programs among Indian elderly women regarding sleep and sleep-related behaviours to support their sleep occupations.

Keywords: sleep, sleep-related behaviors, elderly women