Understanding Sleep Quality in Parkinson's Disease: A Qualitative Project

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Abstract

Background: Parkinson's Disease (PD) is a neurodegenerative disease, affecting 1% of individuals over the age of 60.1 PD can lead to a variety of impairments including difficulties with gait, falls, memory loss, depression, and sleep deficits.2 With sleep disorders being common, interventions such as medications, acupuncture, and exercise programs are commonly utilized.3-4 Sleep disturbances can have a lasting impact on one's independence and can increase burden of care on caregivers.5

Purpose: The purpose of this study is to understand sleep quality for individuals with PD.

Methods: A qualitative phenomenological research design was utilized. This design focused on individual interviews, a focus group interview, an observation during a support group meeting and document analysis. Six individuals with PD were recruited from a local support group and participated in one of the activities mentioned. All interviews were recorded, and transcriptions were checked for clarity. Transcriptions were then analyzed, and subsequent themes developed.

Results: The following themes and subthemes were established. 1. Factors impacting sleep (subthemes: PD Specific Issues, Age-Related Issues, and Sleep Aides) 2. Energy Level (subthemes: Activity Limitations, Morning Routine, Nap Necessity) 3. Sleep Education.

Conclusions: This project shows how disease-specific issues such as tremors can impact sleep quality, leading to lower energy levels and nap necessity to complete daily tasks. Contributing factors such as age, bladder control, and comorbidities such as stroke, cancer, or chronic pain also impacted sleep. Understanding what sleep looks like in PD can help determine how medical professionals can improve sleep quality for this population.