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Perspective

Association between Patient-Reported Data and Objective Sleep Parameters

Sheng-Mao Chang*

Department of Neurology, National Taipei University, Taipei, Taiwan

DESCRIPTION

Sleep is an important determinant of physical and mental well-being, influencing everything from cognitive function to cardiovascular health. The advent of advanced sleep-monitoring technologies has enabled researchers and clinicians to measure objective sleep parameters with unprecedented precision. These parameters, including sleep duration, efficiency, latency, and stages, offer a wealth of information about sleep quality and patterns. When combined with Patient-Reported Outcomes (PROs) such as perceived sleep quality, fatigue, and daytime functioning, a comprehensive understanding of sleep's impact on health emerges. This article explores the relationship between objective sleep parameters and PROs, shedding light on their implications for clinical practice and research.

Understanding objective sleep parameters

Objective sleep parameters are measurable aspects of sleep obtained using tools such as Polysomnography (PSG), actigraphy, or wearable sleep trackers. Common parameters include:

Sleep duration: Total time spent asleep during a sleep episode.

Sleep efficiency: The ratio of time spent asleep to the total time spent in bed, expressed as a percentage.

Sleep latency: The time it takes to transition from wakefulness to sleep.

Wake After Sleep Onset (WASO): The amount of time spent awake after initially falling asleep.

Sleep stages: Time spent in different stages of sleep, including light sleep (stages 1 and 2), deep sleep (stage 3), and Rapid Eye Movement (REM) sleep.

Patient-Reported Outcomes (PRO'S): PROs are subjective measures that capture patients' perceptions of their sleep and its impact on their daily lives. These outcomes are typically assessed through validated questionnaires, such as:

Pittsburgh Sleep Quality Index (PSQI): Measures overall sleep quality.

Epworth Sleepiness Scale (ESS): Assesses daytime sleepiness.

Fatigue Severity Scale (FSS): Evaluates the severity of fatigue.

Insomnia Severity Index (ISI): Gauges the severity of insomnia symptoms.

Correlations between objective parameters and pros

Studies often investigate how objective sleep metrics align with patient-reported experiences. While there is frequently a correlation, the relationship is not always straightforward:

Discrepancies in perception: Patients may report poor sleep quality despite normal objective parameters. This phenomenon, termed "paradoxical insomnia," highlights the role of psychological factors, such as anxiety or hyperarousal, in shaping sleep perceptions.

Daytime functioning: Objective measures of poor sleep, such as reduced sleep efficiency or increased WASO, often correlate with daytime impairments like fatigue or cognitive difficulties. However, individual variability in tolerance to sleep disruption can influence PROs.

Sleep disorders: In conditions like Obstructive Sleep Apnea (OSA) or insomnia, both objective disruptions (e.g., fragmented sleep) and subjective complaints (e.g., daytime sleepiness) are common. Yet, some individuals with OSA may underestimate their sleep disturbances, complicating diagnosis and treatment.

Clinical implications

Comprehensive assessment: Combining objective measures with PROs provides a holistic view of sleep health. For example, PSG may confirm a diagnosis of sleep apnea, while PROs assess the condition's impact on quality of life.

Tailored interventions: Discrepancies between objective and subjective data can guide personalized treatment. Cognitive-Behavioral Therapy for Insomnia (CBT-I) is particularly effective for patients with perceived sleep difficulties despite normal objective metrics.

Correspondence to: Sheng-Mao Chang, Department of Neurology, National Taipei University, Taipei, Taiwan, E-mail: mao@chang.gmail.com

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Monitoring treatment efficacy: Tracking changes in both objective parameters and PROs can evaluate the effectiveness of interventions, such as CPAP therapy for OSA or pharmacological treatments for insomnia.

Research insights

Advances in technology: The proliferation of wearable devices has democratized access to objective sleep data. While less accurate than PSG, these tools provide valuable longitudinal insights and complement PROs in large-scale studies.

Bi-directional relationships: Research reveals a bidirectional relationship between objective sleep parameters and PROs. For instance, poor objective sleep metrics can exacerbate conditions like depression or chronic pain, which in turn worsen subjective sleep experiences.

Population variability: Factors such as age, gender, and comorbidities influence the alignment between objective and subjective sleep measures. Understanding these nuances is vital for interpreting study findings and applying them to diverse populations.

Challenges and future directions

Subjective bias: PROs are inherently influenced by mood, expectations, and cultural factors, which can skew results. Developing more nuanced questionnaires may help mitigate these biases.

Improving technology: Enhancing the accuracy of wearable devices while maintaining affordability will bridge gaps in objective sleep monitoring, especially in resource-limited settings.

Integrated models: Advanced analytics, such as machine learning, can integrate objective data and PROs to predict health outcomes and optimize treatment strategies.

CONCLUSION

The interplay between objective sleep parameters and patient-reported outcomes underscores the complexity of sleep health. While objective measures provide quantifiable insights, PROs capture the lived experience of sleep and its broader implications for well-being. Together, these tools offer a robust framework for diagnosing, treating, and researching sleep disorders. As technology and methodologies evolve, leveraging both perspectives will be pivotal in improving sleep health and overall quality of life.