



Sleep Deprivation Among Students

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Abstract

Sleep deprivation is very common among college students, hitting 73% with sleep problems, according to "Regents of the University of Michigan." To study the causes of sleep deprivation, I surveyed fifty students at Kansas State University, asking questions about the students' sleep habits, class load and involvement with athletics, wondering if athletes and those with a heavy course load were more sleep deprived than those not involved in athletics and those with a lighter class schedule. My results showed a positive correlation between athlete involvement and sleep amount. However, I found no correlation between the amount of credit hours taken and whether or not people fall asleep in class. Sleep deprivation is often a result of over-scheduling with classes or being involved with sports or social activities. According to the National Sleep Foundation, with a minimal amount of sleep, this increases fatigue as well as energy and focus, whether it be school work or at game time.

Purpose

The purpose of this research is to find out what directly causes college students sleep deprivation.

Questions, Hypotheses, and Predictions

Question:

Is there a positive relationship between student athletes and the amount of sleep they get?
Is there a positive relationship between students with a heavy course load and if they fall asleep in their classes?

Hypothesis:

Student athletes are more likely to get the least amount of sleep at night.

Students taking more than 16 credits are more likely to fall asleep in class.

Study System

My study system were the students of Kansas State University located in Manhattan, Kansas. I surveyed 50 students in the student athlete center and the dining hall.

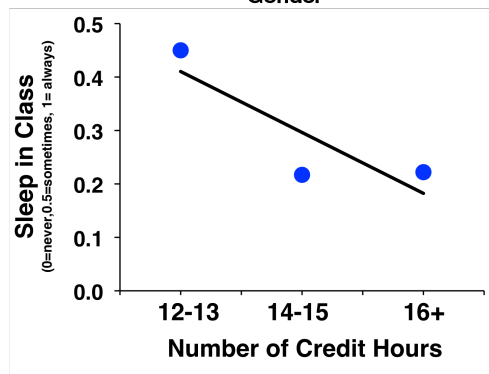
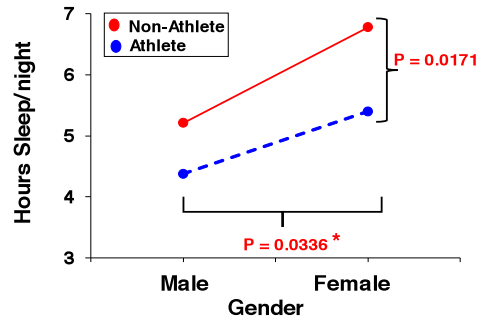


Methods and Experimental Design

To receive data from the student body of K-State, I made a survey comprised of questions asking about sleep habits, involvement in athletics and their course load. Distributing these surveys in my local dining hall as well as the student athlete center, I had almost an even number of athletes and non-athletes take the questionnaire. By translating my results into numbers on a scale, I was able to comprise graphs showing correlations between certain variables.

Results

I found a positive correlation between students involved in athletics and the amount of sleep they get every night. The student-athletes surveys reflected that they got less sleep than those not involved in athletics. I did not find any relationship between the amount of credit hours a student takes and whether or not they fall asleep in their classes. These results surprised me as I thought those taking more credit hours would fall asleep in class due to a lack of alertness after focusing in several other classes throughout the day. Instead, the graph showed that students taking 12-13 credit hours have been falling asleep in class more than those taking 16+ credit hours.



Conclusions

From these results, it is clear to see that college students are not getting an adequate amount of sleep; 9 hours. My results showed most students getting on average between 4 to 6 hours of sleep every night. By losing sleep, these same students are falling asleep in class whether it be a result of their lack of interest in class or it being their involvement in athletics. By losing sleep, teenagers will struggle with their ability to maintain appropriate mood, behavior, cognitive ability and academic performance. According to the Huffington Post, moderate sleep deprivation is equivalent to a blood alcohol content level of .05 to .1 (1%). As sleep deprivation gets worse, and one spends 17-19 hours without sleep, there are chances of drowsiness, an inability to think clearly and even hallucinations. Even though college can be a big adjustment for some students, the best thing to do in order to maintain a healthy state is to maintain a regular sleep schedule, avoid sleeping in on weekends, take afternoon naps, avoid caffeine, smoking and drugs and turn off electronics before fall asleep.

Future Directions

If I were to continue with my research, I would now want to see if students were recognizing their sleep deprivation and see if they chose to change their daily routine if it were impacted by their fatigue. I would most likely survey again, with questions asking of the student's tiredness during the day and whether they chose to acknowledge it and engage in some way to get an adequate amount of sleep every night. From my experiment, I learned that a surveying technique worked pretty well and I got sufficient results; I would most likely survey again.

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