

REASONS FOR SLEEPING DIFFICULTIES AS PERCEIVED BY ADOLESCENTS

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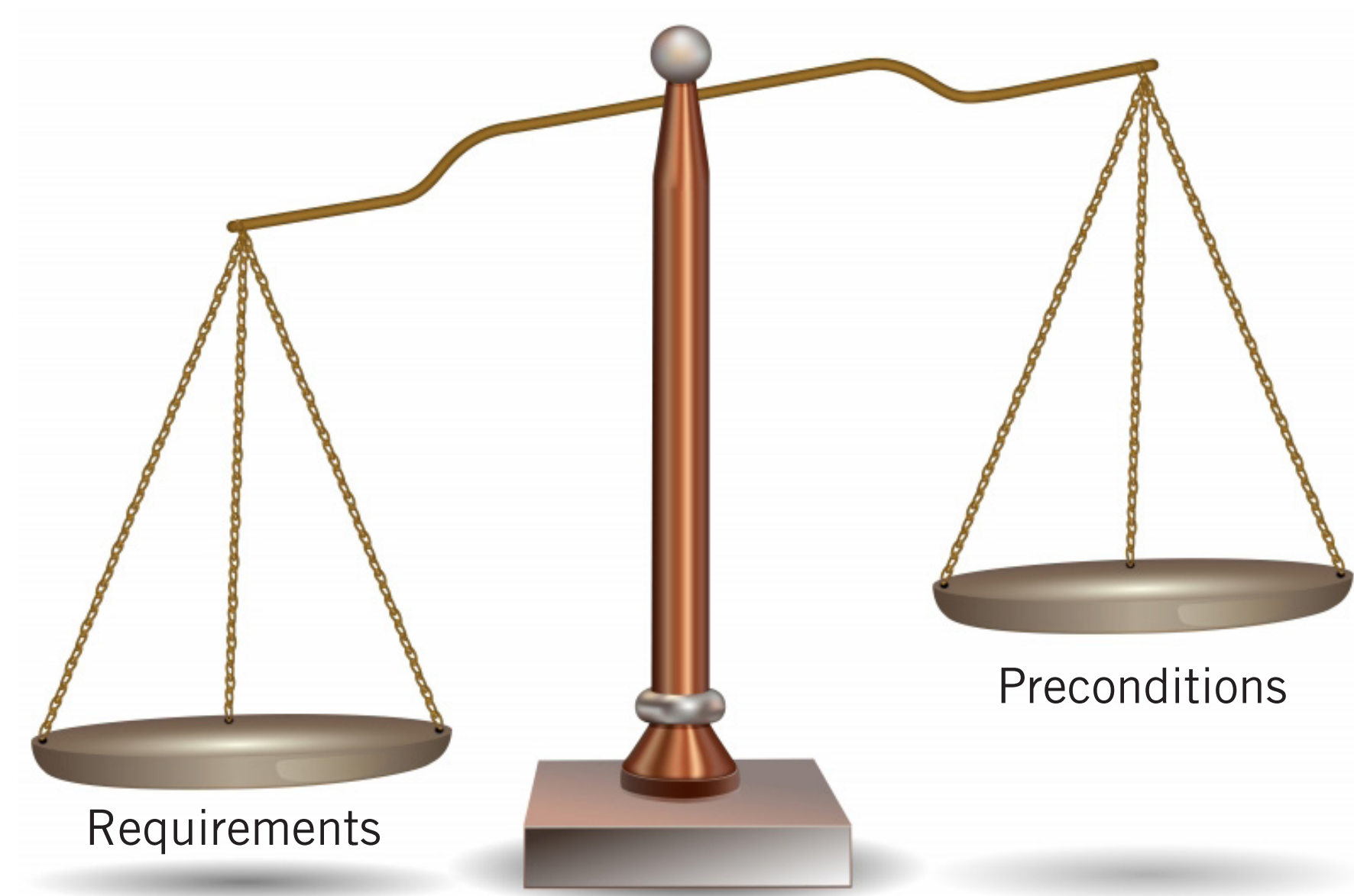
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BACKGROUND

Sleeping difficulties are increasingly prevalent among adolescents worldwide and have negative consequences for health, well-being, and education. Research shows relationships between sleeping difficulties and reduced learning ability, memory impairment, hyperactivity, poorer school performance, lower grades and increased risk of depression and anxiety. In order to develop and implement health promotion about sleep, additional knowledge is required, especially knowledge based on adolescent's own experiences. This kind of research is currently limited.

METHODS

This was a descriptive study, analyzing the data with qualitative and quantitative content analysis. Data was collected using an open ended question in a questionnaire; *If you experience that you sleep too short, have trouble falling asleep, wake up at night or sleep not rested, please write what you think your sleeping difficulties may be due to.* The participants consisted of 475 adolescents in grade nine (15-16 year), in a Swedish city.



Imbalance between requirements and preconditions

STRESS

"...I am constantly stressed, sleep very badly, and I am never fully rested. Soon I break down. There are no improvements..."

TECHNOLOGY USE

"...I think it can be difficult to sleep because you have to be social on social media..."

POOR SLEEP HABITS

"...I have not created any routines regarding sleep; therefore, I often reverse day and night and stay up..."

AIM

The aim was to describe reasons for sleeping difficulties as perceived by adolescents.



Photo: Mostphotos

EXISTENTIAL THOUGHTS

"...it is like voices in my head that make me cry. Sometimes I get no hours of sleep because I can never find peace. I am never satisfied with myself, nor are my parents and my friends..."

NEEDS

"...if you eat too much food during the evening it will be difficult to fall asleep..."

SUFFERING

"...my mother is eating herself to death, I know she wants to kill herself..."

RESULTS

The adolescents' reasons for sleep difficulties can, at a thematic level, be understood as an imbalance between requirements and preconditions. Six main categories constitute the reasons for adolescents sleeping difficulties. The most common category was stress followed by technology use, poor sleep habits, extential thoughts, needs and suffering.

CONCLUSIONS

In order to avoid sleeping difficulties, adolescents need to deal with reasons such as stress, technology use, non-existent sleeping habits, existential considerations, needs and various forms of suffering. Adolescents need support to find a functioning balance in everyday life, dealing with these reasons. The support is needed from especially parents but also from professional caregivers. All health professionals caring for adolescents should remain vigilant regarding the important issue of sleeping difficulties, as good sleep hygiene optimizes adolescents' capability for health and development.



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