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HYGIENIC CHARACTERISTICS OF REST REGIMES AMONG STUDENTS OF HIGHER MEDICAL EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS AND THEIR IMPACT ON HEALTH

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Abstract. This thesis examines the role of sleep hygiene in the lives of medical students, the effects of sleep on memory, attention, and academic performance, and the problems associated with sleep schedule disturbances. Practical recommendations for promoting adequate and high-quality sleep are also presented.

Keywords: sleep hygiene, medical students, sleep schedule, attention, memory, academic performance, healthy lifestyle.

Introduction. Sleep is an essential physiological process for maintaining human health and supporting daily functioning. Students enrolled in higher medical education institutions are particularly required to assimilate large volumes of information, prepare for practical classes, and maintain a high level of cognitive performance throughout the day. Therefore, sufficient and good-quality sleep is one of the key factors contributing to effective learning.

Main Body. During sleep, the body undergoes restorative processes, nervous system functioning is regulated, and information acquired throughout the day is consolidated in memory. Adequate sleep supports concentration, cognitive processing, and the retention of information. Conversely, persistent sleep deprivation may lead to fatigue, forgetfulness, and reduced attention to academic activities. Disruptions in students' sleep schedules may result from prolonged late-night studying, excessive use of mobile phones and computers, consumption of caffeinated beverages in the evening, and irregular daily routines. These factors may delay sleep onset and reduce sleep quality. To maintain good sleep hygiene, students are advised to go to bed and wake up at approximately the same time each day, create a calm environment before bedtime, ventilate their rooms, and reduce screen use in the evening. Avoiding caffeinated beverages close to bedtime, engaging in regular physical activity, and planning study time in advance are also beneficial habits. The recommended sleep duration for young adults, including university students, is approximately 7–9 hours per night. Sleep consists of several stages, with deep sleep and rapid eye movement (REM) sleep playing important roles in memory consolidation and the transfer of learned material into long-term memory. Exposure to screen light in the evening may delay the secretion of melatonin, the hormone involved in regulating the sleep–wake cycle, thereby making it more difficult to fall asleep. Persistent sleep deprivation may increase stress levels and potentially impair immune function. Implementing educational initiatives on sleep hygiene at higher medical education institutions can help protect students' health and promote more effective learning. It is essential for students to manage their time appropriately and maintain a balance between academic responsibilities and rest.

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Conclusion. In conclusion, high-quality sleep is essential for the health, attention, and academic performance of medical students. Adhering to sleep hygiene recommendations, maintaining a structured daily routine, and reducing habits that interfere with sleep can improve students' quality of life. Therefore, educational initiatives promoting awareness of the importance of sleep and healthy sleep habits among young people should be strengthened.

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