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Sleep Disordered Breathing Symptoms and Daytime Sleepiness are Associated with Emotional Problems and Poor School Performance in Children

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Abstract

This study examined the prevalence of sleep disordered breathing (SDB) symptoms and their associations with daytime sleepiness, emotional problems, and school performance in Chinese children. Participants included 3,979 children (10.99 ± 0.99 years old) from four elementary schools in Jintan City, Jiangsu Province, China. Children completed a self-administered questionnaire on sleep behavior and emotional problems, while parents completed the Child Sleep Habit Questionnaire (CSHQ). SDB symptoms included 3 items: loud snoring, stopped breathing, and snorting/ gasping during sleep. Teachers rated the children's school performance. The prevalence rates of parent- and self-reported SDB symptoms were 17.2% and 10.1% for "sometimes" and 8.9% and 5.6% for "usually". SDB symptoms, more prevalent in boys than in girls, increased the risks for depression, loneliness, and poor school performance. Daytime sleepiness mediated the relationship between SDB symptoms and depression, loneliness, and poor school performance. This study suggests the importance of early screening and intervention of SDB and daytime sleepiness in child behavioral and cognitive development.

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