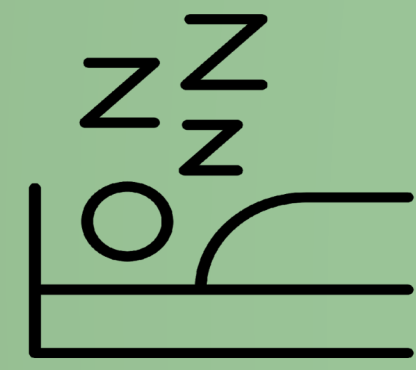


Look on the Bright Side: Sleep, Coping, and Perceived Social Support as Predictors of Psychological Well-Being During the COVID-19 Pandemic

Author: Leah Seldin

Faculty supervisors: Royette T. Dubar, Ph.D and Nicole K. Watkins, Ph.D



Sleep & Psychosocial Adjustment Lab

WESLEYAN
UNIVERSITY

Introduction

- Research suggests that the COVID-19 pandemic has had a deleterious impact on mental health and psychological well-being within the general and college student population (Lee et al., 2021; Son et al., 2020).
- Emerging adult college students are at risk for greater maladjustment during the pandemic due to their vulnerability to mental health difficulties *before* the pandemic (Vindegaard & Benros, 2020).
- Associations have been identified between poorer sleep quality, lower usage of coping strategies including positive reframing, religious coping, and active coping, as well as lower perceived social support and worse psychological well-being (Chouchou et al., 2021; Budimir et al., 2021; Pirutinsky et al., 2020; Li et al., 2020).
- To date, few studies have examined *multiple predictors* of psychological well-being *simultaneously* nor have they examined positive indices of psychological well-being during COVID-19 among college students.
- To address this gap, the present correlational study examined sleep, coping, and perceived support as concurrent predictors of psychological positive psychological adjustment during the COVID-19 pandemic among a sample of emerging adults attending college.

Method

- **N** = 619 emerging adults enrolled at a U.S. college/university
 - 63.8% Female, 89% Non-Hispanic, 66.2% White, 75.4% Heterosexual, 12.6% First generation status, 37.6% Seniors
- **Covariates:** Gender, race-ethnicity, sexuality, first generation status, and senior status
- **General Well-being:** 12 items from The General Well-Being Schedule (GWB) (Fazio, 1977) assessing well-being across four domains: anxiety (4 items), depression (3 items), self-control (3 items), and general health (2 items).
- **COVID-19 positive experiences:** 10 items from the positive experiences subscale of The Epidemic Pandemic Impacts Inventory (EPII) (Grasso et al., 2020)
- **Insomnia symptoms:** 7-item Insomnia Severity Index (Morin, 2001), which assessed severity of insomnia symptoms
- **Sleep duration:** “During the week [weekend] how many actual hours of sleep do you think you typically get per night?”
- **Perceived Social Support:** The Multi-dimensional Scale of Perceived Social Support – Family (4 items; E.g., “My family really tries to help me) and Friend (4 items; E.g., “I can count on my friends when things go wrong) subscales (Zimet et al., 1988).
- **Coping Strategies:** 3 subscales from The Brief-COPE Inventory (Brief-COPE) (Carver, 1997) including **positive reframing** (2 items), **active coping** (2 items), and **religious coping** (2 items)

Results

Table 1

Results of Concurrent Path Model Assessing Sleep, Coping, and Perceived Social Support as Predictors of Psychological Well-being

Predictor	General Well-being	Positive COVID-19 Implications
Sleep		
Insomnia symptoms	-.46 (.08)***	-.16 (.01)***
Sleep duration	.00 (.37)	.02 (.06)
Coping		
Positive reframing	.12 (.60)***	.09 (.09)*
Active coping	.01 (.61)	.22 (.09)***
Religious coping	-.04 (.65)	.07 (.10)
Perceived social support		
Family	.21 (.50)***	.08 (.08)*
Friends	.04 (.55)	.08 (.09)*

Discussion

- Worse quality sleep predicted lower psychological well-being among emerging adults potentially due to decreased emotion regulation and lower motivation to pursue enjoyable activities.
- Positive reframing may have predicted greater psychological well-being by reducing rumination on pandemic stressors and promoting participation in healthy activities.
- Active coping did not predict psychological well-being, suggesting that problem solving may be less impactful when the problem is out of one’s control.
- Greater family support predicted better psychological well-being, demonstrating the importance of positive family relationships during times of stress and close-living with parental figures.
- Although friend support did promote greater perceived implications of COVID-19, it did not have an impact on well-being potentially due to difficulty in maintaining close contact with friends.
- Future research should explore potential bidirectional relationships between psychosocial adjustment factors and positive psychological well-being.
- The current study adds to our knowledge on what psychosocial factors predicted greater psychological well-being among a vulnerable population during a stressful life event, which has important implications for college students (past and present), family members, mental health providers, and higher education.