Students Are Not Sleeping Enough: Comparing High School Sleep Schedules to College Sleep Schedules
A Look Into The Importance of Sleep, the Factors Affecting Sufficient Sleep and its Effect on Health and Academic Success
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ABSTRACT:
Insufficient sleep, especially among students is an increasing concern. The transition from high school to college has altered the sleep patterns of many students for the better. The results from the sleep survey indicated that college is more suitable than high school for sleeping with the majority of the students experiencing an increase in sleep time since attending college. Regardless if students are in high school or college, sleeping for the recommended nine hours each night is still a goal that students have trouble meeting. The major factors students indicated as affecting their amount of sleep include: amount of homework, extracurricular activities, electronics and social activities.

METHODS:
The survey conducted for primary research on student sleep patterns was distributed online in November 2018 to college students at various universities in The United States. All responses are anonymous. The data was collected from 51 college students. The survey was designed to find out if students are sleeping for the recommended nine hours each night and what factors are affecting their sleep schedules. The intention of the survey was to find a correlation between amount of sleep and student grades, as well as determine if students are sleeping more in college compared to high school.

FINDINGS:
Analyzing the trends from my primary research of students’ sleep durations from high school to college, 67.3% of students surveyed said that college sleep was better than high school sleep. In fact, 51% of students surveyed experienced an increase in sleep duration since attending college, 18% of students surveyed experienced a decrease in sleep duration, and 31% of students surveyed experienced the same amount of sleep in high school and college.

In correlation to the amount of sleep received by students and grades, 66% of students surveyed earned similar grades in high school and college, which is reasonable considering individual’s grades wouldn’t be expected to drastically change. However, three of the 51 students surveyed, or 6% of students surveyed reported an increase in grades from high school to college and 15 of the 51 students surveyed or 29% of students surveyed reported a decrease in grades from high school to college. Of the three students who experienced an increase in grades, two students reported an increase in sleep and grades. Of the fifteen students who experienced a decrease in grades, three students reported a decrease in sleep and grades. The relationship between sleep and grades was expected to be a more direct correlation but is most likely the result of the small sample size. The decrease in grades can be the result of harder classes being taken by the students.

Student Responses:
“I have found that I need a lot more sleep in college than in high school because of the amount of work that I have. It takes a lot more energy.”
“In high school I rarely slept because of the amount of homework I had and because I was participating in everything to look good for colleges. In college, the classes are harder and more work, but I take small naps every day to re-energize.”

Based on the results from my primary research, the majority of students surveyed did not sleep for the recommended nine hours each night, but their duration of sleep did increase since attending college.

RESULTS:
Both high school and college students are not sleeping for the recommended nine hours each night. Based on my research, the majority of students slept for an hour more each night in college compared to when they were in high school. Factors affecting the duration of their sleep include: their amount of homework, extracurricular activities, social activities, electronics, jobs and sports. The correlation between amount of sleep and grades in school was identified and can be further explored.

Recommendations for Improved Quality of Sleep:
-Avoid using electronics the hour before bed
-Use ‘do not disturb’ mode on electronics when sleeping
-Have a scheduled bedtime

Sleeping at night is essential because sleeping can help restore cells and memory, as well as prevent potential brain damage from developing (Chen). “Without an opportunity to rest and regenerate, our brain gradually loses its ability to function at an optimal level” (Chen).