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Abstract

Behavioral sleep education has shown promise in young children with autism spectrum disorder (ASD), but has received much less study in adolescents with ASD. We conducted a pilot study of a brief sleep intervention delivered to 18 adolescents, ages 11–18 years, and their parents. Adolescents had sleep onset delay, night wakings, or both. Actigraphy and parent and adolescent questionnaires were collected at baseline and 1 month after treatment. Sleep education, delivered in a 2-session format, was associated with improved sleep onset delay and sleep efficiency in adolescents with ASD as measured by actigraphy a month after the intervention. Parent and adolescent questionnaires also indicated improvements in other sleep parameters and sleep hygiene during that time period. Half of the sample was available for follow-up 3 months after completion of the study and, based on verbal parent and/or adolescent report, gains were maintained for those participants. Parents reported high satisfaction with the program and were able to implement recommendations discussed in the sessions at a high rate of understanding and comfort level. This brief behavioral sleep education program shows promising results in improving sleep hygiene and sleep onset latency for adolescents with ASD. (PsycINFO Database Record (c) 2018 APA, all rights reserved)

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