

Novel sleep education learning modules developed for nurse practitioners

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Sleep health is increasingly recognized as important to overall health, and sleep disturbances and disorders are clinical problems that require diagnosis and management. But when patients present with symptoms and concerns about their sleep disturbances, they often do so to healthcare providers who are not sleep specialists.

Primary care nurse practitioners (NPs) make up an increasingly large percentage of [healthcare providers](#) in the U.S., meeting patients' full ranges of health needs. However, their education in recognizing, evaluating, and addressing [sleep disturbances](#) and disorders is not a standardized part of NP preparation.

To address this need, a first-of-its-kind study from the University of Pennsylvania School of Nursing (Penn Nursing) investigated the use of a novel graduate-level sleep education curriculum for NPs. Asynchronous, case-based sleep education learning modules were combined with an online discussion board for peer-to-peer learning with faculty oversight. This engaged scholarship initiative brought together experts in graduate nursing and [medical education](#), sleep medicine, curriculum design, and nurse practitioners to meet an unmet need of primary care NP curricula.

"The program provided an ideal option for introducing sleep medicine education without significant drain on faculty or curricular resources," says Amy M. Sawyer, Ph.D., RN, Associate Professor of Sleep & Health Behavior at Penn Nursing and lead investigator of the study. "The modules were designed based on adult learning theory, applicable to graduate-level students who are self-directed, experienced, and motivated to learn."

A pre- and post-evaluation study of the learning module program showed that it positively impacted a range of learning outcomes. The systematic evaluation of the program was recently presented at the American Journal of Respiratory and Critical Care Medicine/ American Thoracic Society Conference. The article, "Case-based, Asynchronous Sleep Education Outcomes Among Primary Care Nurse Practitioner Students" has been published online by the *Journal of Clinical Sleep Medicine*.

More information: Case-based, Asynchronous Sleep Education Outcomes Among Primary Care Nurse Practitioner Students, *Journal of*

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