

Students Studying Sleep: Bridging the Gap between Students and Researchers

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INTRODUCTION

Parasomnias:

- Irregular events during sleep
- Abnormal sleep behaviors
- Can be pathological
- High prevalence (present in 92% of our sample)

Research questions:

- How do students cope with parasomnias?
- What are the effective strategies suggested by professionals?

METHODS

77 Canadian post-secondary student participants:

- 47 females, 29 males, and 1 non-binary
- 18-31 years old, (mean age: 22)

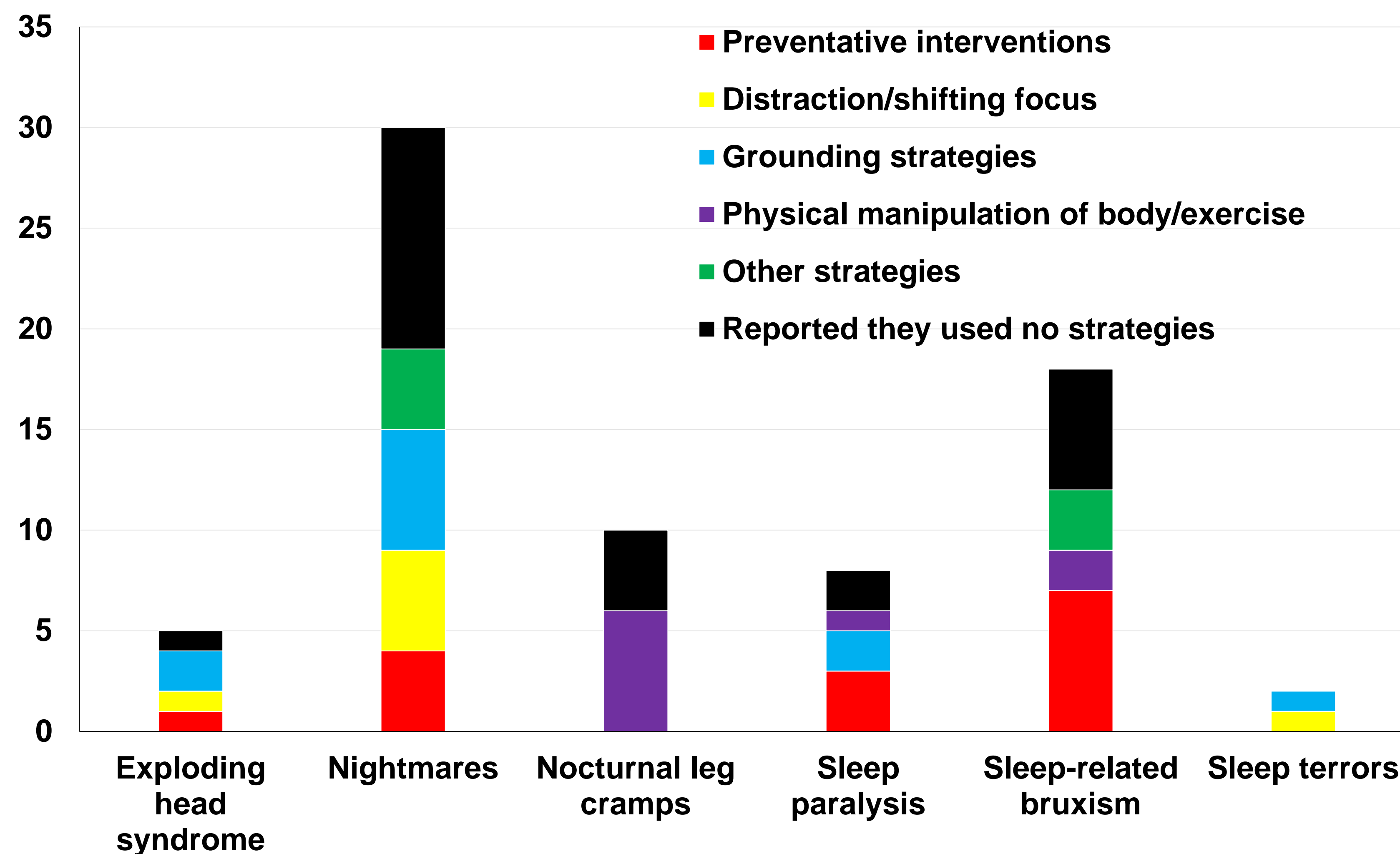
Measures:

- Munich Parasomnia Screening Questionnaire (MUPS): 21-item measure evaluating the frequency of parasomnias

- Open-ended questions:
 - Participants were asked what coping strategies they used to address their parasomnias
 - Responses were coded into 6 categories

RESULTS

Coping Strategies Used by Students to Address Their Parasomnias



- Most participants did not use any coping strategies
- The most frequently used were grounding strategies

Suggested Treatments for parasomnias found in literature

<i>Hypnic Jerks</i>	-Reassurance -Clonazepam & Antidepressants -Avoiding caffeine
<i>Nightmares</i>	-Imagery Rehearsal Therapy -Exposure, relaxation and rescripting therapy
<i>Nocturnal Eating</i>	-Pharmacological (serotonergic) agents -Psychological interventions (CBT)
<i>Nocturnal Leg Cramp</i>	-Stretching before bed -Sleeping under loose covers -For leg cramps: grab and pull toes, massage and stretch the muscle
<i>Sleep Enuresis</i>	-Avoiding caffeine and sedatives -Adapted Dry Behavioral Therapy -Regular day-time timed voiding -Medications: desmopressin & anticholinergics.
<i>Sleep Paralysis</i>	-Making small body movements (e.g. moving fingers) -Insomnia treatment and reassurance
<i>Sleep Talking</i>	-Avoid caffeine or other stimulants in the evening -Relax before bedtime -Create a distraction-free sleep space that has limited light or sound pollution
<i>Sleep Terrors</i>	-Stress management -Creating a safe environment -Antidepressants.
<i>Sleep-Related Abnormal Choking/Suffocating</i>	-Sleep with head propped up so that saliva can flow down the throat -Sleep on side instead of back -Take over-the-counter medication at the first sign of a cold, allergies, or sinus problems.
<i>Sleep-Related Bruxism</i>	-Mouth exercises & Massage -Mouthguard -Medication (e.g. Botox) -Adjust sleeping position or pillow for additional head and neck support

CONCLUSION

- Parasomnias are highly prevalent
- **Few students reported using coping strategies**
 - Students tend not to consult professionals for help
 - They ask friends for help or rely on social media (e.g., Reddit and Instagram)
- **Student researchers can:**
 - Help with research (e.g., recruiting participants, coding and statistical analysis)
 - Share professional and effective coping strategies for parasomnias with peers