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Relationship between Personality Characteristics and Sleep Quality in Menopausal Women: A Comprehensive Review

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ABSTRACT

Menopause is a critical phase in a woman's life characterized by physiological, hormonal, and psychological changes that can significantly affect sleep quality. Personality traits, such as neuroticism, extraversion, and conscientiousness, play an essential role in determining how women cope with menopausal symptoms, including sleep disturbances. This review examines the relationship between personality characteristics and sleep quality in menopausal women, highlighting key findings from recent studies. Furthermore, the implications for targeted interventions to improve sleep quality are discussed.

Introduction

Sleep disturbances, including insomnia and poor sleep quality, are common complaints among menopausal women. Hormonal changes, primarily the decline in estrogen and progesterone, exacerbate sleep difficulties. However, psychosocial factors, including personality traits, also contribute significantly to individual differences in sleep quality during menopause. The Five-Factor Model of Personality—comprising neuroticism, extraversion, openness to experience, agreeableness, and conscientiousness—provides a framework for understanding these individual differences(1,2). This review explores the connection between personality characteristics and sleep quality in menopausal women, synthesizing recent findings.

Sleep Quality in Menopausal Women

Menopause-related sleep disturbances include difficulty falling asleep, frequent awakenings, and non-restorative sleep. These issues are often linked to:

- Hormonal fluctuations, including decreased estrogen levels, which affect thermoregulation and mood(3).
- Vasomotor symptoms such as hot flashes and night sweats, disrupting sleep continuity(4).
- Increased prevalence of mood disorders, including anxiety and depression, which are closely tied to sleep problems(5).

The Pittsburgh Sleep Quality Index (PSQI) is commonly used to assess sleep quality in research settings(6).

Personality Characteristics and Sleep Quality

Neuroticism and Sleep Quality

Neuroticism is strongly associated with poor sleep quality. Women with high neuroticism scores are more prone to rumination, anxiety, and emotional instability, leading to difficulty falling asleep and maintaining sleep(7,8). Research has shown that neuroticism exacerbates the impact of hot flashes and mood swings on sleep disturbances.

Extraversion and Sleep Quality

Extraversion, characterized by sociability and optimism, is often linked to better sleep quality. Extraverted individuals tend to have robust coping mechanisms and lower levels of stress, which may mitigate the impact of menopausal symptoms on sleep(9). However, studies have also suggested that high extraversion may lead to irregular sleep patterns due to increased social activities(10).

Conscientiousness and Sleep Quality

Conscientious individuals are more likely to adhere to sleep hygiene practices, such as maintaining consistent sleep schedules and avoiding stimulants before bedtime. These behaviors contribute to better sleep quality during menopause(11).

Openness and Sleep Quality

Openness to experience has shown mixed associations with sleep quality. While curiosity and adaptability may promote positive coping strategies, individuals high in openness may also exhibit higher sensitivity to environmental changes, affecting sleep(12)

Agreeableness and Sleep Quality

Agreeableness, associated with interpersonal harmony and trust, is generally linked to better emotional regulation and stress management, indirectly benefiting sleep quality.

Interplay of Hormonal and Psychological Factors

The relationship between personality traits and sleep quality is mediated by hormonal changes and psychological factors. For instance:

- High neuroticism may amplify the perception of vasomotor symptoms, worsening sleep quality.
- Women with high conscientiousness are more likely to seek medical advice and adhere to treatment for menopausal symptoms, improving sleep.

Interventions to Improve Sleep Quality

Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT)

CBT tailored for menopausal women addresses both personality-related and symptom-driven sleep issues. For example, CBT strategies can help individuals high in neuroticism manage rumination and anxiety.

Mindfulness-Based Interventions

Mindfulness training has been shown to improve sleep quality by reducing stress and promoting emotional regulation, particularly beneficial for women with high neuroticism.

Pharmacological Interventions

Hormone replacement therapy (HRT) can alleviate vasomotor symptoms, indirectly improving sleep quality. Adherence to

such therapies may be influenced by personality traits like conscientiousness.

Lifestyle Modifications

Encouraging regular exercise, a healthy diet, and consistent sleep schedules can improve sleep quality, particularly in women with high conscientiousness and extraversion.

Future Research Directions

- **Longitudinal Studies:** More research is needed to explore how personality traits and sleep quality interact over the menopausal transition.
- **Cultural Differences:** Studies should examine how cultural attitudes toward menopause influence the relationship between personality and sleep.
- **Intervention Efficacy:** Further research should assess the efficacy of personality-targeted interventions to improve sleep quality.

Conclusion

Personality traits significantly influence sleep quality in menopausal women. High neuroticism is associated with poorer sleep quality, while conscientiousness and extraversion are generally linked to better sleep outcomes. Understanding these relationships can inform targeted interventions to enhance sleep quality and overall well-being during menopause.

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