Developing Sets of Survey Questions to Measure Children's Sleep Health

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What was the research about?
Healthy sleep is important for a child's well-being, school performance, and mood. Doctors can ask children about their sleep health to identify and treat sleep problems. However, few reliable surveys are available for doctors to use to ask children about their sleep.

In this study, the research team created sets of survey questions that asked children or their parents about sleep health. The team interviewed children and their parents to make sure they could understand the questions and that the questions included sleep health topics important to them.

What were the results?
The research team created two sets of survey questions to measure important aspects of children's sleep health. One set asked about common problems that disturb a child's sleep and cause trouble falling or staying asleep. The other set asked about ways that sleep problems affect a child's ability to function during the day, such as problems staying awake or changes in mood. Each set of questions had two versions. In one version, children answered questions about their own sleep. In the other version, parents answered questions about their children's sleep. Tests showed that the question sets provide a good measure of children's sleep health.

What did the research team do?
Using a set of questions designed for adults, the research team developed sets of questions for children and their parents to answer to describe the children's sleep. The team then interviewed 28 children with sleep problems, 33 parents of children with sleep problems, and 8 sleep experts. The team asked whether there were other important questions to add about sleep health. To find more questions about children's sleep, the team also looked at other surveys.

Next, 32 children and 21 parents read and responded to the new sets of sleep questions. Their answers helped the research team see how well the parents and children understood the questions. The team then changed or removed survey questions that weren't clear.

Finally, the research team created two surveys with the sleep questions. One survey asked children about their sleep. The other survey asked parents about their children's sleep. The team used the survey...
responses to identify the most accurate questions to measure the quality and effects of children's sleep.

**What were the limits of the study?**
The survey questions didn't ask about everything that may affect children's sleep health. For example, the survey didn't include other factors that may prevent healthy sleep, such as the level of noise from neighbors.

Future research could translate the survey questions from English into other languages so more people could use the survey. Researchers could also use the survey questions to study how a change in a child's health affects sleep.

**How can people use the results?**
Doctors can use some or all of the survey questions to see whether children have sleep problems and how serious those sleep problems are. The results may also help doctors to guide treatment for sleep problems.

To learn more about this project, visit www.pcori.org/Forrest100.