Original Article

Ramadan fasting, mental health and sleep-wake pattern

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Abstract

Background: Life style Changes during Ramadan month could possibly affect sleep-related behaviors such as total daily sleep time, sleep and wake up time and brain waves. In addition, Spirituality and religiosity have a marvelous influence on mental health and effective solutions against stress are being religious and believe in God. This review discusses the results of all related studies about possible effects of Ramadan fasting on various aspects of sleep pattern and mental health.

Methods: Keywords such as ‘Ramadan’, ‘Ramadan Fasting’, ‘Islamic Fasting’, ‘Fasting in Ramadan’ and Fasting along Sleep, Chronotype, Sleep Latency, REM, NREM, Brain Wave, Psychology, Mental health, Religion, Mood, Depression, Social interaction, Depressive illness, Psychomotor performances, Bipolar disorders, Accident, Mania, Anxiety and Stress were searched via PubMed database, Scientific Information Datebas (SID) and also some local journals, hence, 103 related articles from 1972 until 2010 were studied.

Results: The results of studies about the effects of Ramadan fasting on sleep pattern is not similar and these differences could be due to cultural and life style discrepancy in several countries. Fasting during Ramadan could lead to delay in sleep-wake cycle, decrease in deep sleep and lack of awareness during the day.

Conclusion: There are various reasons such as dietary pattern, hormonal changes and also stress which could alter the quantity and quality of sleep during Ramadan. Also, according to the available information, there is a relationship between fasting and mental health.

Keywords: Ramadan fasting, sleep, mental, mood

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