Pharmacological and non-pharmacological interventions for non-respiratory sleep disturbances in children with neurodevelopmental disorders: a systematic review

Record Status
This is a bibliographic record of an ongoing health technology assessment being undertaken by a member of INAHTA. Links to the published report and any other relevant documentation will be added when available.

Citation
Pharmacological and non-pharmacological interventions for non-respiratory sleep disturbances in children with neurodevelopmental disorders: a systematic review. Health Technology Assessment

Authors’ objectives
Sleep is essential for physical and mental health, growth and development. Having trouble sleeping (sleep disturbance) can have a large impact on the individual and their family. There are three kinds of sleep disturbance: difficulty getting to sleep; difficulty falling back asleep if awoken in the night; and irregular sleep cycles (eg. sleeping during the day and being awake for long periods during the night). Children with damage to, or disorders of, the brain (known as neurodisabilities) are more likely to have sleep difficulties compared to typically developing children. Such problems are usually more severe. Sleep disturbances create problems across a number of areas of a child’s life as well as that of their parents. Help with their child’s sleep is a high priority for parents. Sleep disturbance among children with neurodisabilities has a number of causes. This means there need to be different types of treatments. These range from drugs, which act on parts of the brain which control sleep and waking, to non-drug treatments such as training parents in managing their child’s sleep, changing bed- and rising-times to a more typical schedule, and removing foods from the diet which may affect sleep. At the moment we do not know enough about how well the different treatments work for children with neurodisabilities. Furthermore, no one has examined and brought together the evidence on drug and non-drug treatments. It is important that this piece of work is done so that health professionals, and parents, are better informed about how to manage sleep disturbance in children with neurodisabilities, and the areas where more research would be helpful are identified. This project will: examine the evidence on how well different treatments for sleep disturbance for children with neurodisabilities work; examine whether some treatments work better for specific types of neurodisabilities; examine whether the way a treatment is delivered, or who delivers it, influences how well it works; review evidence on parents views on the acceptability of treatments; identify treatments that look promising, and which would be practical for use in NHS settings. To achieve these aims we will use an internationally recognised research method known as a systematic review. It involves: searching widely to identify relevant research papers or reports; selecting papers relevant to the research question(s); identifying, and recording, all the information in the papers on how well the treatment worked and how the study was carried out; assessing the quality of the research and whether the results are trustworthy; pulling all the studies together and comparing the findings; drawing conclusions. This process is carefully documented so that others can see how the review was carried out and assess whether the conclusions drawn can be relied upon. The research team includes researchers with expertise in systematic reviews and child sleep disturbance, and professionals who work with children with neurodisabilities with sleep problems on a day to day basis. A group of parents of children with neurodisabilities will advise the team. As well as a detailed project report, we will also produce a research summary and a poster. These will be widely distributed to paediatric, community and mental health services, voluntary sector organisations, and parent groups, in electronic and hard copy formats.

Project page URL
http://www.nets.nihr.ac.uk/projects/hta/1421202

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