

A Hidden Epidemic of Parasomnias Among Post-Secondary Students: Prevalence and Psychological Correlates



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INTRODUCTION

- **Parasomnias:** sleep disorders that involve abnormal behavioral and mental activities at night (e.g., nightmares)
- Research on parasomnias among post-secondary students and young adults is scant
- University students frequently have sleep issues (e.g., insomnia), which are risk factors for development of parasomnias
- Goals:
 - 1) Investigate one-year prevalence of parasomnias in post-secondary students
 - 2) Explore relationships between parasomnias, nightmares, psychological distress, and neuroticism

METHODS

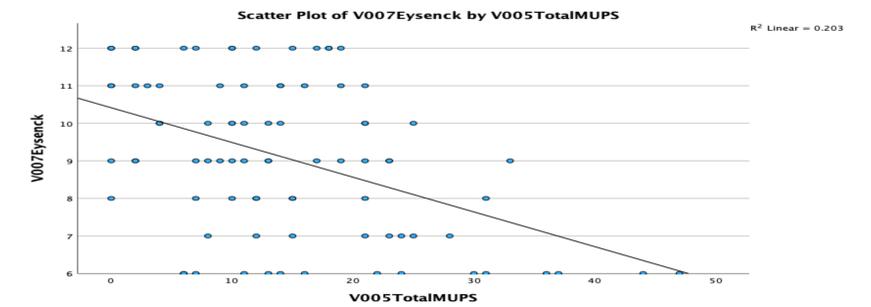
- Online survey
- 85 participants (49 f, 31 m) from post-secondary institutions
- **Munich Parasomnias Screening Questionnaire (MUPS):** presence/ absence & frequency of 21 parasomnias
- **Eysenck Personality Questionnaire-Revised (EPQR):** neuroticism. Higher score = lower neuroticism
- **Sleep Symptom Checklist (SSC):** psychological distress

CONCLUSION

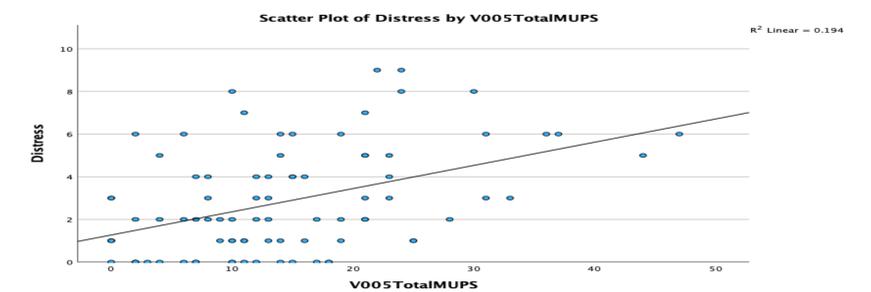
- 93% experienced at least one parasomnia during the past year
- Nightmares were most common
- The more “neurotic” & distressed, the more frequent are parasomnias & nightmares
- 1st investigation in Canada

RESULTS

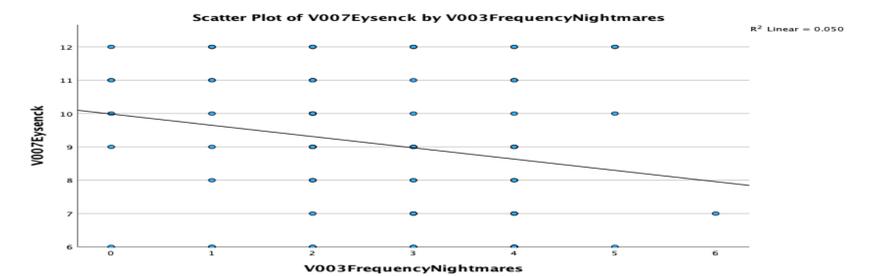
Parasomnia	% with the parasomnia
Nightmares	81%
Hypnic jerks	55%
Sleep talking	39%
Sleep-related bruxism	35%
Nocturnal leg cramps	34%
Rhythmic feet movements	26%
Periodic leg movements	25%
Sleep-related groaning	20%
Confusional arousals	20%
Hypnagogic and Hypnopompic hallucinations	19%
Sleep terrors	18%
Nocturnal eating	18%
Exploding head syndrome	15%
REM sleep behaviour disorder	15%
Rhythmic movement disorder	14%
Sleep paralysis	14%
Violent behaviour	7%
Sleep-related abnormal swallowing	5%
Sleep enuresis	5%
Sleepwalking	5%
Sleep-related eating disorder	0%



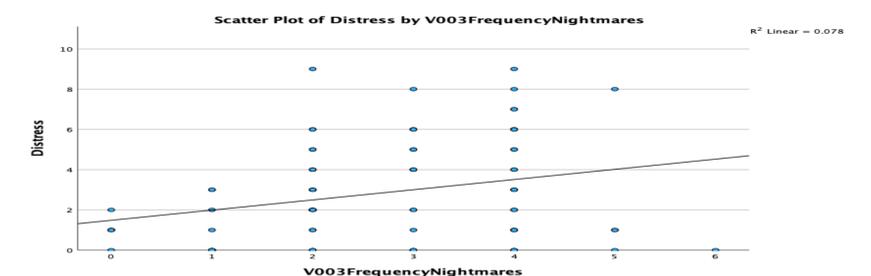
Moderate significant negative correlation ($r = -.451$) between Neuroticism score and parasomnia frequency



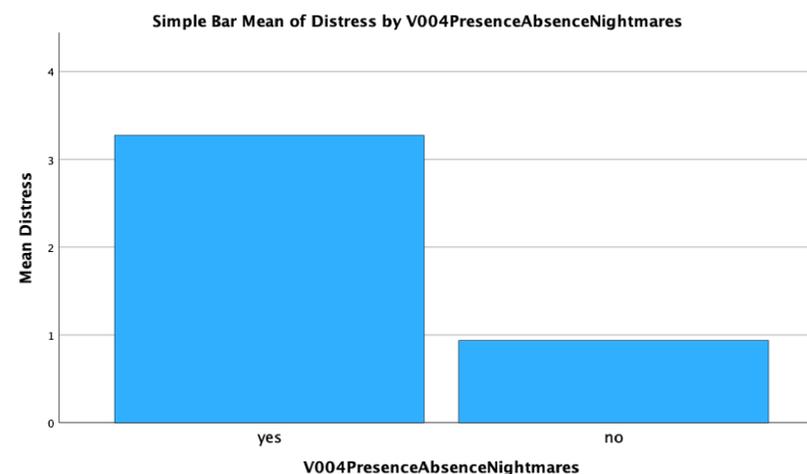
Moderate significant positive correlation ($r = .441$) between Distress score and parasomnia frequency



Weak significant negative correlation ($r = -.224$) between Neuroticism score and nightmare frequency



Weak significant positive correlation ($r = .279$) between Distress score and nightmare frequency



Those ($n = 69$) who reported nightmares had significantly higher levels of psychological distress than those ($n = 16$) who reported no nightmare