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Age-oriented CBT-I treatments for toddlers, children, adolescents: Overcoming insomnia and nightmares

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Objectives: Insomnia in early childhood, school children and adolescents is a very frequent disorder with severe emotional consequences. Beyond, also the prevalence of nightmares is high with up to 7% of children and adolescents suffering from regular nightmares. As chronification is common among youngsters suffering from sleep disorders, early treatment is necessary. Here, three age oriented treatment CBT-I programs will be presented with short- and long-term effects.

Methods: The Mini-KiSS treatment for parents of children 0.5-4 years with sleep problems is a structured CBT-I oriented program addressing within 6 sessions common sleep and bedtime problems as anxiety sleeping alone, frightening of darkness, nightmares, etc. For school-children (5-10 years) and their parents, another treatment was developed (KiSS), with three sessions for the children and further three for the parents. CBT-I elements are enriched by a stuffed leopard. Based on these techniques children are able to establish self-helping sleep strategies. For adolescents, an age-oriented treatment, addressing chronotype changes, puberty etc. based on a fictive sleep lab was constructed as CBT-I training (JuSt). Adolescents receive 5 sessions, parents are invited for one session regarding their youngsters sleep problems and bedtime recommendations.

Measurements and Results: All treatment programs were evaluated within several studies. Sleep log data as onset latency, night wakings, sleep duration, and sleep efficiency were conducted besides actigraphy data, sleep questionnaires (CSHQ, SSR, SDSC etc.), and behavior questionnaires (CBCL, YSR). Long-term-effects up to one year will be presented.

Conclusion: Here, three age-oriented and short treatment programs will be presented with long-term outcomes.

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