

Association between Bruxism and Pain, Sleep Quality, and Psychosocial Factors among College Students: A Systematic Review

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ABSTRACT

Introduction: Bruxism, the habit of clenching or grinding teeth during sleep or while awake, is increasingly seen among college students. It is often linked to jaw pain, headaches, poor sleep, and psychological issues such as stress, anxiety, and depression. Because existing studies report mixed findings, a systematic review is needed to bring the evidence together.

Aim: This review aims to examine published research on the relationship between bruxism, pain, sleep quality, and psychosocial factors in college students.

Materials and Methods: Electronic databases, including PubMed, Scopus, Web of Science, and Google Scholar, were searched for observational and analytical studies. Eligible studies assessed bruxism alongside validated measures of pain, sleep quality, and psychosocial outcomes such as stress, anxiety, and depression.

Data extraction focused on study design, diagnostic criteria, outcome measures, and findings. Study quality was evaluated using standardised appraisal tools.

Results: Previous studies suggest that bruxism is more common among students with high stress levels. It has been associated with orofacial pain, temporomandibular discomfort, headaches, cervical pain, poor sleep quality, and daytime fatigue. Psychosocial factors—particularly academic stress and emotional distress—appear to play a strong role, pointing to a multifactorial origin.

Conclusion: Bruxism in college students is linked to pain, sleep problems, and psychosocial stress. Early identification and multidisciplinary management, including stress reduction, sleep hygiene, and physiotherapy, may help. Future longitudinal studies are needed to clarify causal pathways and guide preventive strategies.

Keywords: Academic stress, Orofacial pain, Stress reduction.

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