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JETLAG PHENOMENON AMONG NIGERIANS STUDYING IN INDIA AND MALAYSIA

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Statement of the Problem: There are a large number of Nigerians studying and aspiring to study in India and Malaysia. Due to the great time differences between Nigeria and these countries, there exists the possibility of experiencing adjustment problems. This study aims to determine the burden of jetlag phenomenon and adaptation strategies among Nigerians studying in these countries.

Methodology: Online surveys using Google forms were disseminated to Nigerians studying in Indian and Malaysian Universities and the data were analysed.

Findings: A hundred and three (103) eligible persons responded to the survey, and their socio-demographic characteristics are presented in Table 1. Many of them did not know what jetlag was (52.4%). Most of them (78.6%) also reported falling asleep less easily on their first night of arrival, of which 44.4% continued to experience same for months and even up to a year. Many also reported having more wakeful episodes during the night (41.7%); later waking time (56.3%); feeling less alert 30 minutes after waking from sleep (58.3%) and generally feeling more tired since arrival (57.3%), with many of them haven experienced same for prolonged durations. Those studying in Malaysia reported sleeping later ($\chi^2=16.68$; $df=6$; $p=0.011$); waking up later ($\chi^2=25.78$; $df=4$; $p<0.001$) and feeling more tiredness ($\chi^2=21.74$; $df=6$; $p=0.001$) compared to those studying in India, but there were no such differences for the other symptoms. As an adjustment/coping technique, most of them had attempted maintaining daytime alertness (72.8%) and maintaining a dark room at night (55.3%), of whom 21.0% and 31.6% respectively found these measures very effective, while 57.3% and 50.8% respectively found them slightly effective.

Conclusion and Significance: This study reveals the great enormity of this problem. It is recommended that prospective students be enlightened on the possibility of experiencing this problem and adjustment techniques even before departure from Nigeria. School clinics in these countries should also include jetlag management in their treatment programs to help affected international students.

Biography

Ahmed Dahiru Balami is a medical doctor with a passion for health research. He holds a Master of Public Health, majoring in Epidemiology and Bio-statistics and is currently a PhD student of Epidemiology and Bio-statistics at the University Putra Malaysia. He has research experience in both infectious and non-infectious diseases with special interest in Malaria, pre-hypertension/hypertension and psychological medicine. He has authored several articles in local and international journals.

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