

## Paper Session E4: Sleep: Focus on Special Populations

### *Parental Stress and Psychological Status and Sleep in Preschool Children in an Urban Setting*

Barbara Ann Caldwell, PhD, APN-BC, University of Medicine and Dentistry of New Jersey, Lebanon, NJ ~ Nancy Redeker, PhD, Yale University, New Haven, CT

**Purpose:** The purposes of the preliminary study were to examine: (a) mother's perception of enrolling her preschool child in a sleep study in order to improve enrollment in a large study focused on minority inner city preschool children; (b) the patterns of objective and subjective preschool sleep patterns; and (c) the relationship between objective and subjective preschool sleep and maternal stress and psychological status.

**Theoretical Framework:** An ecological model can be used to frame an understanding of the relationship of poverty to childrens' development, in particular, sleep as a biological component. Mothers who are living in inner city environments may be more at risk for psychological distress, including stress, anxiety, depression and psychological trauma and may have a negative impact on the preschool child's sleep patterns.

**Methods:** A cross-sectional observational design was used. Twenty-one inner city women and their preschool children were recruited from a WIC program. Wrist actigraphs were worn by the preschool child for 5 days and mothers completed a child sleep habits, stress index, depression, anxiety and psychological trauma instruments.

**Results:** Preschool childrens' sleep efficiency and sleep periods were reduced compared to the Acebo's study norms. Mothers' report of their child's sleep habits indicated a mean score which placed 90% of the children at risk for a sleep problem. Life stress in the mother was elevated and was significantly related to the preschool child's time in bed and sleep period. Mild to severe symptoms of depression and mild anxiety symptoms were identified. PTSD criteria was in the upper range for 11 of the 21 women which has implications for family and work roles.

**Conclusions and Implications:** Several areas are noted to improve recruitment and retention for a larger research study and for clinical practice.