

Falling asleep at the stroller: Sleep quality and childcare division

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PURPOSE

This study aims to explore the impact of sleep disruption on expected versus reported childcare responsibilities to advance understanding of the transition to parenthood.

METHODS

- Participants:** 31 couples that lived together without children but planned to have children in the future
- Procedure:** Couples were introduced to the infant simulator at an in-person lab session and took it home for the weekend. The simulator required care through bottle feeding, burping, rocking, & diaper changing.

Condition 1: Control

Quiet time for 11 hours beginning at 9pm each night

Condition 2: Sleep disruption

No quiet time; intermittent cries

- Measures:** Participants reported on how equal they expected the childcare labor to be in the morning and how equal it actually was at the end of day

RESULTS

- Fig 1.** Sleep disrupted individuals woke up more often ($M = 3.70, SD = 1.97$) than controls ($M = 2.11, SD = 1.94$)
- Fig 1.** Sleep disrupted individuals reported lower sleep quality ($M = 2.54, SD = .63$) than controls ($M = 2.86, SD = .65$)
- Fig 2.** There was no significant difference between expected and actual childcare equality reports between conditions
- Fig 3.** There was a significant relationship between expected and actual childcare equality reports for sleep disrupted ($b = .790, p < .001$) and control individuals ($b = .442, p = .014$)
- Fig 3.** There was a difference of .499 in actual reports between conditions for those with lower expectations

DISCUSSION

- Sleep disruption led individuals with lower expectations of equality to report more unequal childcare at the end of the day
- Those who expected a more equal childcare distribution at the beginning of the day reported it actually being more equal (in both conditions)

Predictions of less equality in childcare fulfilled for sleep deprived individuals during weekend infant care task



The infant simulator prompts caretakers with realistic cries to perform a variety of tasks.



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Fig 1. Those experiencing sleep disruption via the simulator reported lower sleep quality

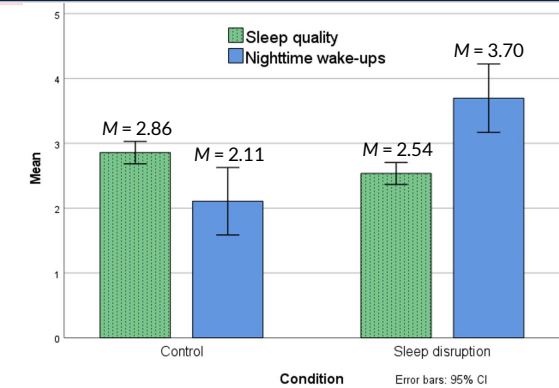


Fig 2. No significant differences in expected and reported childcare equality

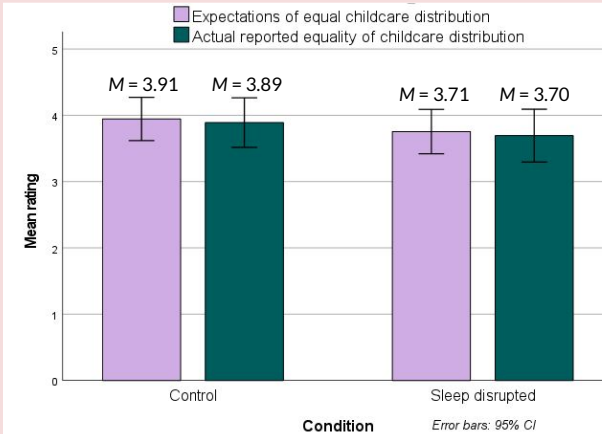


Fig 3. Sleep disruption + low expectations of equality in childcare = lower actual equality

