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### The experience of sleep deprivation in intensive care patients: Findings from a larger hermeneutic phenomenological study

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#### Summary

Sleep deprivation in critically ill patients has been well documented for more than 30 years. Despite the large body of literature, sleep deprivation remains a significant concern in critically ill patients in intensive care unit (ICU). This paper discusses sleep deprivation in critically ill patients as one of the main findings from a study that explored the lived experiences of critically ill patients in ICU with daily sedation interruption (DSI). Twelve participants aged between 20 and 76 years with an ICU stay ranging from three to 36 days were recruited from a 16 bed ICU in a large regional referral hospital in New South Wales (NSW), Australia. Participants were intubated, mechanically ventilated and subjected to daily sedation interruption during their critical illness in ICU. In-depth face to face interviews with the participants were conducted at two weeks after discharge from ICU. A second interview was conducted with eight participants six to eleven months

later. Interviews were audio taped and transcribed. Data were analysed thematically. "Longing for sleep" and "being tormented by nightmares" capture the experiences and concerns of some of the participants. The findings suggest a need for models of care that seek to support restful sleep and prevent or alleviate sleep deprivation and nightmares. These models of care need to promote both quality and quantity of sleep in and beyond ICU and identify patients suffering from sleep deprivation to make appropriate referrals for treatment and support.



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## Keywords

Daily sedation interruption; Intensive care; Critical illness; Sleep; Sleep deprivation

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