

# **Sleep Disorders**

- ❖ **Sleep** is a universal behaviour that has been demonstrated in every animal species studied, from insects to mammals.
- ❖ It is one of the most significant of human behaviours, occupying roughly one third of human life.
- Sleep is very much necessary for survival, because prolonged sleep deprivation leads to severe physical and mental impairment and may also finally to death.

## The various types of sleep disorders include mainly:

### 1) Insomnia:

Insomnia is difficulty getting to sleep or staying asleep, or having non refreshing sleep for at least 1 month.

#### **Symptoms:**

 For at least a month, patients chronically and recurrently have trouble either falling or staying asleep, or commonly, both.

#### Causes:

0

- May be due to any one of the conditions like
  - Dysthymia, Depressive episode (of major depression or bipolar disorder),
    Schizophrenia, Generalized anxiety disorder,
  - General Medical Condition, Sleep apnea, Restless leg syndrome, Any painful or distressing condition (arthritis, Chronic heart or kidney conditions), Dementia, Substances like Caffeine, Stimulants like cocaine, Alcohol withdrawal, Opioid withdrawal, etc.

#### **Symptoms:**

- Onset is gradual in late teens or early adult years.
- In addition to prolonged nocturnal sleep (>8 h, generally 9 h or more) with difficulty waking up, patients also experience excessive daytime sleepiness with frequent naps.
- The naps may be intentional or not, in any case they come on gradually, are not associated with dreaming, and importantly, are not refreshing.



#### Causes:

- Related to General Medical Condition: Respiratory failure, Obstructive sleep disorders, Hypothyroidism, Posttraumatic (i.e., upon recovery from a closed head injury), Focal lesions (tumours, infarcts) in cerebral hemispheres, thalamus, hypothalamus, or brain stem), Substances like Alcohol, Sedative-hypnotics (especially benzodiazepines), various antidepressants, Opioids (either during acute use or in withdrawal), Withdrawal from stimulants or caffeine.
- o **Related to Another Psychological Disorder:** Depressive episode, as in major depression, or more commonly, bipolar disorder.

#### **Treatment:**

- o Proper sleep hygiene is important.
- Scheduled naps are helpful.
- Medication.

## 2) Obstructive Sleep Apnea (Breathing-Related Sleep Disorder):

Obstructive sleep apnea is characterized by obstruction of the upper airway during sleep, resulting in decreases in arterial oxygen saturation, after which respiration resumes normally.

It tends to occur in patients who snore, although most snorers do not have sleep apnea, and results in a sensation that sleep has not been refreshing.

#### **Symptoms:**

- o Onset typically in middle years, in females especially after menopause.
- Apneic episodes last 10-120 seconds, and 30-300 may occur each night.

#### Causes:

o Block in airway, Obesity, Defective brain stem respiratory mechanism, etc.

#### Treatment:

- o Patients are instructed to sleep on their sides, a position that favours airway patency.
- Obstructive sleep apnea may be treated with medication and in severe cases, continuous positive airway pressure devices are effective.
- On certain occasions your doctor might suggest a small operation to improve the airway.

## Some other types of sleep disorders are:



### Narcolepsy:

- Narcolepsy is a chronic neurological disorder caused by the brain's inability to regulate sleepwake cycles normally.
- At various times throughout the day, a person with narcolepsy experience fleeting urges to sleep.
- o If the urge becomes overwhelming, patients fall asleep for periods lasting from a few seconds to several minutes.

#### \* Restless Legs Syndrome:

- Restless legs syndrome is an uncomfortable sensation of the legs, sometimes described as a creepy or crawly feeling or as the sensation of ants walking on the skin.
- o It tends to be worse at night, and is relieved by walking or moving.
- o It appears as a cause of sleep initiation insomnia, because the patient may find it difficult to lie still in bed, needing to get up to relieve the discomfort.
- o It appears often in pregnancy, Iron or vitamin B12 deficiency, anaemia, and renal disease.

#### ❖ Nightmare Disorder:

 Nightmares are vivid dreams that become progressively more anxiety producing, ultimately resulting in an awakening.

## Sleep Terror Disorder:

- o Patients with Sleep Terror disorder, sit up in bed with a frightened expression, scream loudly, and sometimes awaken immediately with a sense of intense terror.
- They may remain awake in a disoriented state, but more often fall asleep.

#### **❖** Sleep Walking Disorder (Somnambulism):

- Patients sit up and sometimes perform motor acts, such as walking, dressing, going to the bathroom, talking, screaming, and even driving.
- The behaviour occasionally terminates in awakening, with several minutes of confusion or more frequently, the person returns to sleep without any recollection of the sleepwalking event.

**Diagnosis of Sleep Disorders:** Diagnosis of the sleep disorders are done mainly by tests like Polysomnography (Sleep test), and other tests like MRI, CT scan, etc

**Treatment:** Treatment is dependent on the underlying medical condition and appropriate medication is prescribed by the doctor after the diagnosis.



## **Guidelines for good sleep**

- 1. Have a fixed sleep time
- 2. Wake up at a fixed wake up time.
- 3. try aromatherapy and mild exericse a few hours before sleep
- 4. if something is troubling you write it down.
- 5. If you are not sleepy leave the room and read a book or do something less stimulating
- 6. Ensure that the temperature in the room is correct for you.
- 7. Ensure that the matress or the bed is supporting for your back
- 8. Use your bed for sleeping and sex. Donot associate bed with any other activities like work, watching TV, arguments, eating etc.
- 9. Do not watch television or read intensely emotional material in bed.
- 10. Donot smoke or have coffee or any other stimulating drinks prior to bed time
- 11. Avoid intense exercise before bed time
- 12. Donot get involved in emotionally intense arguments or discussions prior to your bed time
- 13. Have a shower before bed time
- 14. Do not extend sleep hours during holidays
- 15. Have a glass of warm milk. Food products such as chocolate and banana promote sleep because of tryptophan in them.