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Sleep and Sleep Disorders

Over the past three weeks the newspapers and television news programs have been reporting on sleep disorders and the use of various sleep medications with potential danger to our general health. The New York Times had three such articles on 3/5/12-Too Often, Doctors Overlook Narcolepsy, on 3/13/12-Pills' Risks Complicate Long Wait For Sleep, and 3/24/12- The Case for Sleep Medicine.

I thought this would be a good time to look into this matter and report back to you the facts about normal sleep, sleep apnea and a very interesting condition called Narcolepsy. So lets' start with normal sleep, typically it should take 12 minutes to fall asleep; with the deeper stages occurring after one to one and half hours before R.E.M. sleep is reached. The dream state which is R.E.M. sleep is one of the most important stages that are essential to our general health. R.E.M. stands for rapid-eye-movement and in this stage we have sharply heightened brain activity and temporary paralysis of muscle that control posture and body movement.

Loss of normal amount of sleep both in time and in depth (R.E.M.) will have devastating effect on our health and wellbeing. Conditions that have been related to the amount of sleep and depth of sleep to name only a few are hypertension, heart disease, cancer, weight gain and type II diabetes, and depression. This point was brought out by Gayle Greene a science writer this weekend's New York Times, "The Case for Sleep Medicine", of research published in the British Medical Journal (BMJ) of the danger of using sleep medication. However, the lack of normal sleep showed much more devastating effects as to be, "the most important predictor of how long you will live-perhaps more important than smoking, exercise or high blood pressure." Research at the University of Chicago took healthy young people and limited their amount of sleep for only six nights. The results produced hormonal profiles of much older people, increase in the level of the stress hormone cortisol, a decrease in growth hormone (GH) and compromised immune response with reduction in white blood cell activity.

I will start with sleep apnea because this represents 18,000,000, Americans. This condition is characterized by abnormal pauses in breathing or abnormally low breathing during sleep. The pause can last a few seconds to as much one minute and may occur 5 to 30 times or more in an hours. The patient may not be aware that they have stopped breathing, but this will disturb the deep sleep of R.E.M. and cause sleep deprivation. There are three types of sleep apnea (CSA) central, (OSA) obstructive, and complex or mixed. Central lack of respiratory effort is 0.4%, obstructive is interrupted by a physical block of airflow like snoring is 84% and mixed 15%. There is a commonality of body type seen in the majority of obstructive variety having an overweight or BMI greater then 25 and being short necked (carrying the head forward of center know as pitch). This condition requires treatment because it will lead to hyper tension, strokes, heart attacks, depression etc. Diagnosis can be done at a sleep lab, which can be quite expensive as much as \$4,500, less expensive at home method that is monitored and downloaded in to a computer program costing \$500.

Treatment methods can vary from medical using CPAP machine (continuous positive airway pressure) mask, use of a dental appliance termed a M.O.R.A. (mandibular-orthopedic-repositioning-appliance), that pushed the mandible (jaw) forward removing the tissue obstruction in the oral pharynx. Some homeopathic remedies that have claimed to stop snoring might help. Finally, the most successful method is chiropractic and applied kinesiology techniques. This will change the head forward PITCH distortion lengthening the neck, removing the neurological obstruction of subluxation that effect the breathing center in the brain stem with (cranial faults) and the structural and mechanical effect on the diaphragm.

A study published in BMJ, on 2/4/06; 332(7536): 266-270 “Didgeridoo Playing as Alternative Treatment for Obstructive Sleep Apnea Syndrome: randomized Controlled Trial. The study consists of 25 patients who had sleep apnea for 18 years showed playing this horn as an effective treatment for moderate obstructive syndrome. This is because it causes the exercise of the swallowing muscles, and the tongue, that causes better support of the oral pharyngeal tissues and eliminates sleep apnea. I had taken a course know as ZHT Technique (Zhou’s Hypoxicology Therapy) on 10/28/05 and have used what I have learned for the past seven years. Dr. Jin Zhou had emigrated from mainland China, where he was an orthopedic surgeon. He became a chiropractor and has been studying this condition and developed a method of correction similar to what the playing of the didgeridoo does. It requires the patient to exercise the muscles of swallowing and of the pharyngeal muscle there by eliminating sleep apnea.

My work with TMJ for more the 30 years along with my diaphragm technique that I described in newsletter-9 for treatment of GERD and Heartburn, give me a distinct advantage of treating and correcting this difficult problem with a 75% or better cure rate. However, this technique requires the patient’s full participation in doing these special exercises which take about 5 minutes and require at least 5 or more applications per day. For more information on this technique and exercise call our office.

Narcolepsy is considered a chronic disorder of the central nervous system (CNS). It is characterized by the inability to control sleep-wake cycles. It manifests as irresistible and sudden bouts of sleep which can last for a few seconds or several minutes duration. Even the period of deep sleep also know as N.R.E.M. (none rapid-eye-movement), and R.E.M. sleep are out of order. It is believed that this disorder is an autoimmune response of the body causing the death of some 70,000 specialized brain cells that secrete a hormone hypocretin that organizes the sleeping patterns. This would make this condition not curable and needing drug treatment with stimulants during the day and sleeping drugs (hypnotics) at night. However Dr. Goodheart founder of AK found a connection to the small intestine function that might help regulate this problem.

For those of us who have some sleeping problems I have found a special cranial fault that I named the Pineal Fault, when corrected will greatly helps restore normal sleeping patterns. Other nutritional supplements that aid normal sleep are calcium to help relaxation, velerian root and melatonin. If you are having any sleep problems call and make an appointment.