

Insomnia

Overview:

- Insomnia is the difficulty to either fall asleep or continuous sleep for hours at adequate conditions.
- Insomnia is not naturally linked to stress of life, and must therefore be taken seriously and treated.
- Insomnia may be caused simply by the symptoms of another problem.
- There is no specific test to diagnose insomnia; doctors use several methods to dismiss other problems.
- The best way to prevent insomnia is to stick to a fixed sleep schedule in the right environment.

Definition of insomnia:

A common sleep disorder in adults that means it is either difficult to get to sleep or stay asleep for long enough hours even though there is a good environment.

People with insomnia often feel dissatisfied for not getting sufficient sleep. Many people may go through this condition and it often passes without the need for treatment. Also, many believe that insomnia is normal with life stress, but it is important to take it seriously because of its close association with physical health.

Types of insomnia:

- **Non-Chronic insomnia**

Going through sleep disturbances for a short time.

- **Chronic insomnia**

Sleep disorders that occur at least three nights a week for at least three months.

Causes:

insomnia may be just a symptom of another problem, and the causes of chronic insomnia may be:

- psychological reasons:
 - Stress and anxiety
 - Psychological stress.
 - Trauma.
 - Depression .
- sleeping routine and environment:
 - Travel.
 - Changes in working hours (shifts) and evening work even at home.
 - Naps (may cause insomnia to some).
 - unfavorable sleeping environment
 - Eat heavy foods before bed, which can lead to disturbance or stomach reflux during sleep.
 - Caffeine like coffee and others.
 - Nicotine (smoking).
- Certain diseases:
 - Respiratory system problems (such as: asthma and Pulmonary embolism
 - Problems in muscles and joints (such as: arthritis).
 - Chronis pains.
- Certain medications.

Symptoms:

- difficulty falling asleep
- Waking up during sleep and difficulty to sleep again.
- Wake up early ahead of waking time.
- Not feeling refreshed after waking up.
- Weakness and laziness during the day.
- Mental disorders (such as difficulty concentrating).
- Behavior disorder (such as feeling impulsive or aggressive).
- Mood Swings.
- Problems at work or school
- Social relations issues

When to see a doctor:

- If insomnia affects lifestyle.
- When you feel tired or drowsy during the day
- If insomnia limits productivity and prevents you from enjoying the company of friends, family or hobbies.
- When you fail to adapt your sleep routine

Diagnosis:

There is no specific test to diagnose insomnia; doctors use several methods such as:

- Personal history.
- Sleep records and some questionnaires
- Laboratory tests: Using blood tests to rule out insomnia related to certain medications and health problems.
- Sleep planning

These tests help your doctor develop an appropriate treatment plan.

Risk factors:

1. Mental disorders and stress.
2. Lack of control of sleep times

Most vulnerable groups:

1. Women
2. People older than 60 years
3. People with chronic diseases

Complications:

- Impact on the general quality of life
- Poor physical performance.
- Impact on social performance.
- Decreased functionality.
- Impact on mental health.
- High incidence of psychiatric comorbidities in patients with chronic insomnia.

Treatment:

1- Non-drug treatments:

There are psychological and behavioral techniques that can be useful for treating insomnia, such as:

- **Practice relaxation techniques:**
(Breathing exercises, mental relaxation exercises, meditation techniques, guided images, listening to sound recordings) can help you sleep and also go back to sleep at midnight.
- **Using sleep stimuli:**
Stimulation helps build a relationship between the bedroom and sleep by limiting the type of activities allowed in the room.
Sleep stimuli include:
Tidying up the room, using a comfortable bed, restricting sleep hours, getting out of bed when you stay awake for 20 minutes or more.
- **Cognitive behavioral therapy:**
Includes behavioral changes (such as: Maintaining a steady sleep routine that includes sleep time, wake-up time, stay away from afternoon naps (as well as cognitive changes) is designed to modify unhealthy beliefs and concerns about sleep and teach rational and positive thinking.

2- Drug treatments:

There are many medications that help to sleep and reduce insomnia. It is important to consult your doctor before taking any type of medication, which are resorted to if other methods do not work.

Prevention:

- **Define a sleep routine and try to stick to it:** Make sure you get enough sleep every day.
- **Create a comfortable sleeping environment,** keep away from light and noise.
- Limit stimuli around bedtime (such as: television, work tasks, computer, and video games).
- **Reduce stimulants in food and drink before bed (such as:** Soft drinks, coffee or tea).

Frequently Asked Questions:

- **What is a sleep log?**
Sleep Log is a simple diary table that helps track sleep details and can help your doctor know the causes of insomnia.
- **Do you use sedatives and hypnotics have long-term effect?**
The main issue is increasing dependence, especially drugs known to treat anxiety and the underlying psychological disorders.

Misconceptions:

- **Counting helps you fall asleep**
Fact: Spending time with the bed and staring at the ceiling until falling asleep will never work, as it is advisable to get up and leave the room.
- **Adults need 8 hours of sleep**
Fact: Everyone has a specific need for sleep according to their lifestyle and activity level.

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