

Insomnia: Hypertension and Prevention

Liam Donovan

By Liam Donovan

A recent study from Henry Ford hospital in Detroit has confirmed that insomnia can lead to hypertension. The study has shown that hypertension was more prevalent in people suffering from insomnia compared with normal sleepers.

People with insomnia have trouble falling asleep or staying asleep. It is often caused by stress, anxiety, health problems, lack of exercise or stimulant or alcohol use. Among Americans, it is the most common sleep complaint.

According to Christopher Drake, the lead author of the study, "We found that the longer it took the subjects to fall asleep and more times they woke during the night, the more severe their hypertension."

More than five thousand people participated in the study, which was an internet survey. Those with insomnia were compared with normal sleepers to find the results.

There are various ways to help get a good night's sleep. It's important to go to sleep at the same time every day in order to establish a schedule with your body. After a while it will associate that time of day with sleeping and sleep will come more easily.

Relaxation before going to sleep is also very helpful. This is why it is important to avoid alcohol or stimulants right before bed, as they will prevent you from relaxing properly. Progressive body relaxation (consciously relaxing and untensing each of your muscles) is a simple but very effective way to do this. Taking deep breaths after doing so will further the effect.

There are psychological methods to relax as well. After relaxing your body

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physically through progressive muscular relaxation and deep breathing, doing something to distract your mind can bring one to deeper levels of relaxation. The classic scenario is counting sheep, but there are other methods as well. Imagining yourself in a peaceful place is probably less monotonous and more relaxing. Another unique method is to imagine it is already time to get up in the morning. The more aversion you can build to this scenario, the more your body will want to go to sleep.

Insomnia is a pain. Coming from someone who only slept three hours last night, lack of sleep can interfere with your life and cause you to feel uncomfortable and tired in situations you need to be alert in. It's important to sleep well for your own sake. Doing so will improve your health and your quality of life greatly.

Insomnia resources:

<http://www.medicinenet.com/insomnia/article.htm> [1]

<http://www.well.com/~mick/insomnia/> [2]

Liam Donovan is a junior at The College of New Jersey majoring in Communication studies. He is currently an intern at Bioscience Technology.

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