

Diabetes May Lead to Poor Sleep



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Diabetes is a chronic disease that is becoming more and more prevalent in our society. Poor diet, refined and processed foods, a sedentary lifestyle and a worldwide epidemic of obesity are contributing to the rapidly rising numbers of the disease. According to the World Health Organization (WHO), approximately 150 million people worldwide have diabetes. The WHO estimates that by the year 2025, there may be 300 million people with this disease.

Type 2 diabetes, also known as non-insulin dependant diabetes, is the most common form and accounts for approximately 90% of all diabetes cases worldwide. Type 2 diabetes is a disease of poor blood sugar control that does not result from low insulin levels (insulin is the hormone your body produces to carry glucose into every cell of your body), but from a lack of sensitivity of cells to receive glucose. Diabetes may lead to a number of serious health complications, including blindness (diabetic retinopathy), cardiovascular disease, kidney failure, neuropathy and diabetic foot disease. In addition to these serious health concerns, a recent study reports that diabetes may negatively affect sleep.

A study was conducted at the Institute of Sleep Medicine in Saifabad, India on the relationship between type 2 diabetes and sleep duration and quality. A total of 220 type 2 diabetics were studied. Each subject answered the Pittsburgh Sleep Quality Index (PSQI) in order to measure subjective sleep quality. On average, the subjects reported that they only sleep 6.1 hours per night and that they preferred an extra 1.8 hours of sleep per night. The results from the PSQI indicated that all subjects had poor sleep. The authors concluded that a significant proportion of type 2 diabetics have reduced sleep and that there is a definite association between blood sugar control and the quality and quantity of sleep.

Diabetes may lead to a sleep disorder through its association with obesity. Fatty deposits in the throat and uvula may cause a narrowing of the airway, thereby leading to snoring and, possibly, sleep apnea. Snoring and sleep apnea will further worsen sleep quality and duration and put the person at greater risk for more serious disease, such as cardiovascular disease.

Blood sugar is best controlled through the combined efforts of lifestyle changes, supplements and in some cases, drugs. A diet that is low in refined carbohydrates and simple sugars and high in protein has been shown to be effective in maintaining normal blood sugar. In the case of obesity, weight loss will increase the cells' ability to take in glucose and thereby decrease high blood sugar levels. Exercise improves metabolism and gets more glucose out of the blood and into your cells. If you choose to follow a supplement plan, be sure to follow a plan designed for healthy blood sugar control. With respect to drugs, consult your licensed health care professional to discuss what drugs are suitable for you.

Diabetes can be managed successfully. Take the first step today so that you may have better health, and better sleep, tomorrow.