

# Fatigue in Parkinson's Disease

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## Common Sleep Problems

- Excessive Daytime Fatigue
- Difficulty Falling Asleep
- Difficulty Staying Asleep
- Acting out dreams
- Restless Legs Syndrome
- Obstructive Sleep Apnea



## Excessive Fatigue in Parkinson's

- 33-58% of Parkinson Patients complain of extreme fatigue
- 1/3 of PD patients consider fatigue to be the most disabling symptom
- May precede diagnosis.
- May worsen as PD progresses
- May or may not relate to depression
- You sometimes have to bring this problem to the attention of your doctor!!

## What Causes Fatigue

- Poor “sleep hygiene”
- Difficulty Falling Asleep
- Difficulty staying asleep
- Medication side effects!!!
- Obstructive Sleep Apnea
- RLS/PLMS
- Primary problem
- Depression

## Medication and Fatigue

- Sinemet (carbidopa/levodopa)—(14%) and increase as the dose increases.
- Dopamine agonists (Mirapex/Requip)—probably worse for fatigue and also dose dependent
- Anti-cholinergic medications worsen fatigue

## Difficulty Falling Asleep and Staying Asleep

- Inability to get comfortable (“off”)
- Restless Legs (20%)
- Too many daytime naps
- Poor “sleep hygiene”
- Wearing off in the night
- Bladder or Prostate problems.
- Sleep Apnea.
- Dream Enactment Behavior.

## Dream Enactment Behavior

**Montage of Vigorous, Aggressive,  
and Violent Behaviors During  
REM Sleep in RBD**

*\*Please reference the included CD-ROM  
for footnotes related to this video.*

## Dream Enactment Behavior

**51 Year-Old Japanese Man With  
RBD Is Fighting Off Snakes  
During Dream-Enactment**

*\*Please reference the included CD-ROM  
for footnotes related to this video.*

## REM Sleep Behavior Disorder

- Often Precedes Parkinson's disease
- Ranges from Vocalizations to arm and leg flailing
- Reported in almost 50% of patients with PD
- Potentially disruptive to sleep of patient and partner
- Easily treatable!!

## Restless Legs

- Present in about 20% of patients with Parkinson's disease
- Urge to move the legs associated with an unpleasant sensation when laying or sitting still.
- Abnormal sensations relieved by moving the legs.
- PLMS and sleep disruption

## Obstructive Sleep Apnea

- 4.4% of the general population but about 20% of Parkinson's patients
- Can result in frequent awakenings, worsened quality of sleep, and potentially worsened fatigue during the day.
- Snoring with pauses in breathing followed by gasping.



## Treatment of Fatigue in PD

- Exclude underlying causes
  - Sleep Apnea
  - RBD
  - Hypothyroid
  - RLS/PLMS
  - Medications
  - Depression
- Sleep Hygiene
- Improve overall PD treatment
- Aggressive treatment of Depression
- Urology (Men's Health) evaluation

## Getting to Sleep and Staying Asleep

### ■ DO

- Regular bedtime
- Regular Wake-up
- Relax for 1hr before bedtime
- Use the bedroom for sleep only
- Exercise during the day
- Treat your parkinsonism overnight!!

### ■ DON'T

- Nap in the evening
- Nap more than once
- Eat heavy meals before bedtime
- Continue to lie in bed if you can't sleep
- Drink caffeine late in the day

## Treatment of Dream Enactment

- Clonazepam is about 90% effective even at very low doses.
- Melatonin (3-6mg) or Rozeram
- Quetiapine (Seroquel)
- Dopaminergic medications
- Environmental modification

## Treatment of Sleep Apnea

- Consultation with a sleep specialist and visit to the Sleep Lab
- No alcohol within 3 hours of bedtime
- Weight loss
- Jaw advancement devices
- ENT consultation
- CPAP

## CPAP-Continuous Positive Airway Pressure



## Treatment of Restless Legs

- Make sure no anemia!!
- Treatment with longer acting dopaminergic medications at night.

## What next!!!

- Sometimes Sleep Aids are necessary despite all efforts at “sleep hygiene”
- Can try to use medication side effects favorably
- Dopamine during the night!!
- Fatigue is often a “primary” problem in Parkinson’s disease!!!
- Daytime medications such as Provigil (modafinil) and Ritalin (methylphenidate) may be helpful in some patients.



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