

Sleep and Longevity

By Reggie Binns, RPSGT

Sleep as everyone knows is an important part of life and daily function. We spend approximately one third of our lives sleeping.

Sleep disorders are commonly misdiagnosed and/or missed completely. It also seems that in my experience there is a tremendous lack of education in regards to sleep medicine.

I recently read an article regarding sleep medicine in pediatrics, however the topic was not sleep disorders but rather anesthesiology. I guess you can call that a form of sleep medicine, however I considered the article title as completely misleading.

There have been major industrial accidents in recent years such as Chernobyl, Three Mile Island and the Exxon Valdez, all of which occurred in the early morning hours when the operators were completely fatigued. It is a sad thing to know the facts, such as 200,000 road accidents occurring each year within the U.S. due to some form of sleep deprivation. I have also read that the monetary loss is approx 20 billion dollars a year. This is incredible!

We work within a rapidly growing field that is currently getting so much publicity that the government is finally stepping in to regulate it.

Lately the in vogue topic is sleep disordered breathing (Sleep Apnea).

It is a known fact that sleep apnea alone can cause stroke, hypertension, heart attacks, sudden death, and impotence in males.

Longevity needs to be a focus. In order to obtain this we need to have more education!

In these days we see more and more "Health and Wellness" clinics popping up everywhere with a primary focus on anti-aging. How do we try to slow down the aging process without addressing one of the biggest contributors of the aging process: sleep disorders?

Imagine that you go to a health and wellness clinic and pay a tremendous amount of money to "look well" and become "healthy", but sleep is never addressed. What if you are apneic or worse yet fit into the category of UARS? Due to a lack of education you may not get the results you thought you should get.

Additionally, some people believe that it is possible that we as humans have a specific amount of breaths we are supposed to take, or a certain amount of pre-determined heart beats. If this philosophy could even be remotely true, then I have to ask why would we allow the process to be accelerated?

Physicians especially need to ask more questions of their patients in regards to sleep. In order to do this they themselves need to have more education on the subject. I find it amazing that through all my years of practice as a RPSGT, Primary Care physicians still don't know enough about sleep disorders and often cannot even explain the results correctly to their patients.

Well, we can assist this through education.

The community in Sleep Medicine needs to have one voice and become more proactive in regards to global education! Join our email club and assist need4sleepradio.com to become ONE voice on sleep... Polysomnography!

