

Sleep, sleep disorders and the use of sleep-inducers in Psychiatry

Sono, transtornos do sono e uso de hipnoindutores em Psiquiatria

In Psychiatry, sleep disorders are quite common and are used as diagnostic criteria for certain mental disorders in the diagnostic manuals, including depression, bipolar disorder, anxiety and schizophrenia. Insomnia, which is the most common symptom, may, at times, even precede mental disorder. Recently, the increased incidence of post-traumatic stress disorder has drawn attention to the need for diagnostic and therapeutic analysis of sleep in these patients. However, sleep disorders are comorbidities known to be precursors of depression, anxiety and cognitive alterations. For example, studies show that chronic insomnia is a risk factor for depression and even suggest that the appearance of symptoms of depression would be a constituent part of the evolution of insomnia. In addition, since Sleep Medicine is a new field of study, much remains to be learned about the mechanisms and functions of sleep. In this issue, we also sought to address some basic mechanisms and current aspects of the use of sleep-inducers. Likewise, the discussions of sleep in children and elderly individuals, as well as in patients with dementia, were judged important since, for ontogenetic reasons, diagnosis and suspicion of sleep disorders in these age groups may be distinct from that seen in normal adults. Also included in this volume is the predominant symptom of some sleep disorders, and, more rarely, of some psychiatric disorders, excessive daytime sleepiness, which may lead to significant mental alterations. Another currently relevant and difficult to tackle psychiatric question is violent behavior during sleep. Although such episodes have been studied in many countries, there is no medical-legal protocol for such cases. The article on violence and sleep discusses these aspects.

In conclusion, we recognize the importance of a *Revista Brasileira de Psiquiatria* (Brazilian Journal of Psychiatry) supplement including some aspects of lifetime patterns of normal and abnormal sleep.

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