

## Sleep Disorders

I saw a post on Facebook in which a friend was asking advice on what her husband could do about restless legs syndrome because his doctor was not helping. Perhaps it would be appropriate to consult another doctor. One CDC study estimated that 50-70 million US adults have some type of sleep or wakefulness disorder. Did you know that there are more than 70 different sleep disorders? They are classified into one of three categories:

1. Lack of sleep (e.g. insomnia)
2. Disturbed sleep (e.g. obstructive sleep apnea)
3. Excessive sleep (e.g. narcolepsy)

I could not function without the CPAP therapy for sleep apnea that I have been using since 1998. I still remember the first morning after using the machine and the increased energy due to the fact I did not stop breathing hundreds of times during the night. Sleep apnea could have killed me! It could do the same to you.

Take this simple quiz about sleep disorders. If you answer yes to any of these questions, consult with a medical professional and preferably a sleep specialist.

1. Do you snore loudly and/or heavily while asleep?
2. Are you excessively sleepy or do you lack energy in the daytime?
3. Do you have trouble with concentration or memory loss?
4. Do you fall asleep while driving, in meetings, while reading a book, or while watching television?
5. Do you often have occasional morning headaches?
6. Do you sleepwalk, have nightmares, or have night terrors?
7. Do you experience a nervous, creeping, or tingling feeling in your legs when trying to sleep?
8. Do you suffer from depression or mood changes?
9. Do you have trouble going to sleep or staying asleep?
10. Have you experienced recent weight gain or high blood pressure?
11. Have you been told you hold your breath when you sleep?

We include information about sleep disorders in our classroom fatigue training and encourage people to discuss any potential sleep disorders with their doctor. It is rewarding to know that some of the people who have completed the training have taken that advice and now are receiving treatment for obstructive sleep apnea and other sleep disorders.

Companies should provide fatigue management training for shiftworkers and that training should include information on sleep disorders and how to treat them. If you do not receive fatigue management training, here are some helpful websites that provide information about sleep disorders:

<http://www.webmd.com/sleep-disorders/>

<http://sleepfoundation.org/sleep-disorders-problems>

<http://www.sleepeducation.com/sleep-disorders-by-category>

<http://www.nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus/ency/article/000800.htm>

<http://healthysleep.med.harvard.edu/healthy/getting/treatment/an-overview-of-sleep-disorders>

**“Life is what you make it: If you snooze, you lose; and if you snore, you lose more.”**

**Phyllis George**

**“Hark, how hard he fetches breath.”**

**William Shakespeare, King Henry IV, Part 1**

