

Ten million Indians living with sleep disorders: Study

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With March 14 being celebrated as World Sleep Day, Philips Healthcare India announced plans to organize over 300 sleep-focused awareness events and to train over 500 physicians in dealing with sleep disorders in 2014.

In 2013, the company conducted over 200 sleep focused events and trained over 300 technicians and 600 physicians to meet the demand for trained sleep specialists. It has also introduced the first certificate training program for physicians under the banner of Indian Sleep Disorder Association.

"Sleep disorders are a much more serious issue than most people understand, especially given their direct correlation with other more serious conditions like cardiovascular disease, diabetes, stroke etc. For example, in a country where snoring is traditionally associated with sound sleep, it is extremely challenging to make people aware that it is actually a sign of a serious sleep disorder called Obstructive Sleep Apnea (OSA)," said Mr Bidur Dhau, senior director, Home Health Care, Philips Healthcare India.

According to international studies, OSA sufferers are between four and six times more likely to be involved in a motor vehicle accidents than healthy people. The lack of sleep can also lead to serious health issues such as increased risk of diabetes, weight gain, high blood pressure, irregular heartbeats and stroke among others

Dr Prashant Chhajed, director, lung care and sleep center, Mumbai & Senior Chest consultant, Lilavati and Fortis Hospital, Mumbai, New Delhi, says, "Treating OSA will help you witness immediate relief from symptoms like daytime sleepiness, extreme fatigue thereby resulting in improved energy levels across the day. As per various researches, it can also lower blood pressure, decrease insulin resistance and lower the risk of heart attack and stroke when treated with CPAP therapy."

According to industry estimates, today there are at least 10 million Indians living with different types of sleep disorders, with OSA being the most common. Sleep Apnea is also one of the top 3 causes of heart problem after smoking and diabetes.

Snoring, the most visible and harmless looking symptom of OSA, is also the root cause of high blood pressure and diabetes, as discovered by experts. Studies suggest that 37-51% of obese patients, 37% of Hypertensive patients, 48% of Diabetes patients and 76% of Congestive Heart Failure patients are also found to be suffering from OSA.

From recent Philips Sleep Survey, conducted by The Nielsen Company in India, 93% Indians are sleep-deprived, getting less than the 8 hours of sleep they need every day. An astonishing 11% take leave from work because of lack of sleep. The Survey also reveals that 58% feel that their work suffers from lack of adequate sleep while 11% actually fall asleep at work. The survey also uncovered a disturbing fact that 14% of Indians exhibit pauses in their breathing at night, anywhere from one to more than three times per week.

Pausing in breathing, like snoring, is an OSA indicator, corroborating this link; the survey found that the proportion of the high risk group increased further to 90 % in those suffering from hypertension and diabetes or hypertension and cardiovascular disease.

One of the main treatment options for OSA is Continuous Positive Airway Pressure (CPAP). CPAP therapy provides a gentle flow of pressurized air through the nose and/or mouth using a mask. The air pressure prevents the narrowing and closure of the upper airway, allowing the patient to breathe freely during sleep. CPAP therapy has been shown to improve the patient's quality of life, reduce the short and long term health consequences and save on healthcare related costs. This therapy can display a dramatic decrease in the patient's feeling of sleepiness in as little as two weeks.