

News Release

SLEEP DISORDERS LINKED TO ADHD & BEHAVIORAL ISSUES IN CHILDREN & TEENS

ATLANTA, August 22, 2006 – After a summer of sleeping late, the start of school can be a rude awakening for many students and their families. If children or teenagers don't adjust to rising earlier within a few weeks, parents should check to see if a sleep disorder is causing the problem.

The Link Between Sleep & ADHD

All sleep disorders that affect adults can affect children and adolescents—with different and very significant consequences. There are particular sleep problems associated with attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD), while pediatric sleep disorders also affect many youngsters who don't have this diagnosis. Studies have found that:

- Children with ADHD are sleepier during the day than other children.
- While fewer than 15 percent of school-age children with obstructive sleep apnea (OSA) experience excessive daytime sleepiness, they frequently display distinctive “daytime externalizing behaviors” ranging from hyperactivity, rebellious behavior and aggression to social withdrawal and learning problems, all of which can contribute to poor school performance.*

Snoring: A Warning Sign in Children

Atlanta-based sleep medicine specialist Scott Leibowitz, M.D., D., A.B.S.M., cautions parents that snoring in children is a condition that should be monitored carefully. “Snoring alone has been linked to significant behavioral issues for children and is frequently a sign that a more serious condition may be present,” Dr. Leibowitz said. Research shows that:

- Even without sleep apnea, children who snore perform worse on measures related to attention, social problems and anxious/depressive symptoms.
- Snoring has been found to be a predictor of future ADHD in some children. One study found that children who snore showed a threefold increase in the prevalence of ADHD compared to those who did not after a four-year follow-up.*

The Effects of Puberty on Teens' Sleep (The Night-Owl Syndrome)

Adolescents have their own biological challenges with sleep:

- With the onset of puberty, the circadian rhythms that cause our “biological clocks” to sleep and wake at certain times change. Adolescents tend to follow a biologically delayed sleep pattern: their preferred sleep phase starts in late evening and goes through late morning. This means the ability to go to sleep and wake up at times that comply with typical school schedules is inconsistent with teenagers' “biological clocks.”
- Sleepiness has been linked to learning, memory and attention problems in teenagers.*

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“Unfortunately, the school wake-up time is close to the sleepest point in the circadian rhythm for most adolescents,” says Dr. Leibowitz. “It’s therefore not surprising that we see combative teenagers who play video games until 2 a.m. and are perceived as lazy. Many teens biologically have trouble falling asleep before midnight, which causes them to have real problems getting up by 7 a.m. and getting through their first two morning classes. But there are ways to help adolescents accommodate this sleep pattern, so they function well at school and at home.”

About Dr. Leibowitz

Dr. Leibowitz recently opened the Sleep Disorders Center of CDS, which helps patients of all ages get a good night’s sleep. Dr. Leibowitz, the medical director of the Sleep Disorders Center, completed a clinical and research fellowship in sleep medicine at Stanford University. He is a Diplomate of the American Board of Sleep Medicine (D., A.B.S.M) and is Board certified in internal medicine and sleep medicine.

A faculty member of the Atlanta School of Sleep Medicine, Dr. Leibowitz has written extensively on sleep disorders for medical journals and textbooks. In addition to treating adults and adolescents, he is an advocate for pediatric patients with sleep disorders and is working to bring increased awareness to the Atlanta area about recognition of pediatric sleep disorders. For more information, visit www.cdssleep.com, or call 404-603-7210.

****Sources available upon request.***

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