

Moderate exercise can improve the sleep quality of insomnia patients

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An acute session of moderate aerobic exercise, but not heavy aerobic or moderate strength exercises, can reduce the anxiety state and improve the sleep quality of insomnia patients, according to a research abstract that will be presented on Wednesday at SLEEP 2008, the 22nd Annual Meeting of the Associated Professional Sleep Societies (APSS).

The study, authored by Giselle S. Passos, of Federal University of Sao Paulo in Brazil, focused on 36 patients (eight men and 28 women) with primary chronic insomnia, who were divided into three experimental groups (moderate aerobic exercise, heavy aerobic exercise, and moderate strength exercise) and a control group.

According to the results, after the exercise session, reductions were shown in sleep onset latency (54 percent) and wake time (36 percent) in the moderate aerobic exercise group, while increases were shown in total sleep time (21 percent) and in sleep efficiency (18 percent). A significant increase in the total sleep time (37 percent) and reduction in the sleep onset latency (40 percent) were observed in the sleep log of volunteers of the moderate aerobic exercise group. Finally, a significant reduction (seven percent) in the anxiety state was also observed after moderate aerobic exercise session.

“These findings indicate that there is a way to diminish the symptoms of insomnia without using medication,” said Passos. “This study is the first to look at the importance of using physical exercise to treat insomnia, and may contribute to increased quality of life in people with one of the

most important kind of sleep disorders around the world.”

Insomnia is a classification of sleep disorders in which a person has trouble falling asleep, staying asleep or waking up too early. It is the most commonly reported sleep disorder. About 30 percent of adults have symptoms of insomnia. It is more common among elderly people and women.

It is recommended that adults get between seven and eight hours of nightly sleep.

Source: American Academy of Sleep Medicine

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