

Neurologist can help with sleep problems

April 1 2011, By Keith Herrell

Having trouble sleeping? A neurologist could have the answer to your problem.

Neurologists specialize in the treatment of diseases and disorders of the brain, [spinal cord](#) and nervous systems. In many cases, says UC Health [neurologist](#) Jennifer Rose Molano, MD, these problems are closely associated with sleep issues.

"I think that the field of neurology in general is becoming more cognizant of the interplay between sleep and neurological issues," says Molano, an assistant professor in the University of Cincinnati (UC) Department of Neurology and a member of the medical staff at UC Health Surgical Hospital's Sleep Medicine Center in West Chester.

"Insomnia, for example, is very common and often can be seen in those with a neurological problem," notes Molano. "A lack of sleep can also trigger worsening of conditions that neurologists frequently see, such as headaches and seizures."

In addition, Molano says, health problems that interfere with sleep can be associated with risk factors for serious neurological disorders. For example, obstructive sleep apnea—a condition in which pauses in breathing occur during sleep because the airway has become narrowed or blocked—has been identified as a risk factor for stroke.

"People who snore and stop breathing at night may have obstructive sleep apnea. Getting evaluated by a sleep specialist is important, as

proper treatment can potentially decrease that risk for stroke as well as heart disease,” Molano says.

With additional training in behavioral [neurology](#) as well as sleep medicine, Molano has developed an interest in the relationship between cognition and sleep issues. "If your sleep is interrupted at night, that can interfere with your ability to think during the day,” she points out.

It’s important, of course, to keep a regular sleep schedule, have a sleep-friendly environment, eat right and get regular exercise. Still, many people struggle with sleep issues and seek professional help.

Victoria Surdulescu, MD, is director of the Sleep Medicine Center at UC Health Surgical Hospital. Kenneth Casey, MD, Scott Hoff, MD, and Nancy Solado, a physician assistant, are also on the medical staff, with training in sleep medicine.

"The other staff members—who are part of the pulmonary, critical care and sleep medicine division—and I all see general [sleep](#) medicine patients,” Molano says. "We strive to offer comprehensive, multidisciplinary services to the people we evaluate and treat.”

Provided by University of Cincinnati

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