

The risk of suffering from insomnia is 67 percent higher if a family member is insomniac

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A study presented today by Universite Laval researchers at the 4th World Congress on Sleep Medicine currently underway in Quebec City revealed that the risk of insomnia is 67% higher in people from families in which at least one member is an insomniac.

The research team, directed by Dr. Charles M. Morin of Université Laval's School of Psychology, came to these conclusions following a study involving 3,485 people. The participants were asked to answer a telephone survey on their sleep quality and that of their immediate families. On three separate occasions in the 12 subsequent months, they filled out a mail-in questionnaire on the subject.

The data showed that 40% of respondents came from a family that had at least one member who is an insomniac. Most of them had one insomniac in the family (76%), but some had two (21%), or even three (3%). The risk of suffering from insomnia increased according to the number of family members with insomnia, i.e., 37%, 250%, and 314% for one, two, or three family members with insomnia, respectively.

"There is very probably a genetic factor behind the family aggregation we observed," said Charles M. Morin. "However, we don't know if the mechanism is a physiological process that interferes with [sleep](#) or a predisposition to anxiety." Certain attitudes about insomnia conveyed by [family members](#) could also be involved, the researcher added. "When we

see a member of our family react strongly to an episode of insomnia, we may have the same reaction when faced with the problem ourselves. This type of behavior can transform situational insomnia into a chronic condition," he noted.

"Our study's results suggest that early psychological treatment could benefit people from families with chronic [insomnia](#) sufferers," concluded Dr. Morin.

Provided by Universite Laval

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