

Certain sleep aids may raise hip fracture risk in nursing homes

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List includes common drugs such as Lunesta and Ambien, researchers say.

(HealthDay)—Health staff at nursing homes often give patients sleeping pills to help them sleep, but a new study suggests that a certain class of medications may put patients at raised risk for hip fractures.

A team from Harvard Medical School in Boston looked at more than 15,500 long-stay nursing-home residents, aged 50 and older, who suffered a hip fracture between July 2007 and December 2008. The residents' average age was 81.

About 1,700 of the residents had been given a nonbenzodiazepine hypnotic sleep drug before their hip fracture. This class of drugs includes Lunesta, Sonata, Ambien and Intermezzo.

Those who took nonbenzodiazepine hypnotic sleep drugs were about two-

thirds more likely to suffer a [hip fracture](#) than those who didn't take the drugs, according to the study, published online March 4 in the journal *JAMA Internal Medicine*.

Although the study found an association between the use of the sleep medications and increased [fracture risk](#), it wasn't designed to prove a cause-and-effect relationship. The risk was somewhat higher among new users of the drugs, as well as nursing-home residents who had mild mental or physical decline (compared to more severe mental- or physical-health issues).

"Caution should be exercised when prescribing sleep medications to nursing-[home residents](#)," said Dr. Sarah Berry, of Harvard Medical School, and colleagues.

More information: The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention has more about [hip fractures](#).

[Health News](#)

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