

Sleep disturbance linked to esophageal hypersensitivity

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(HealthDay)—For patients with gastroesophageal reflux disease

(GERD), sleep disturbance is associated with enhanced heartburn perception to capsaicin infusion, according to a study published online Nov. 29 in the *Journal of Gastroenterology and Hepatology*.

Chih-Hsun Yi, M.D., from the Hualien Tzu Chi Hospital in Taiwan, and colleagues examined whether sleep disturbance modulates esophageal sensitivity to capsaicin infusion in patients with GERD. Forty patients were enrolled and underwent sleep quality measurement by the Pittsburgh Sleep Quality Index. The authors documented esophageal sensation to capsaicin infusion by measuring lag time to initial heartburn perception, heartburn intensity rating, and sensitivity score based on esophageal infusion of capsaicin-containing sauce.

The researchers found that 22 patients had sleep disturbance, and they experienced a shorter lag time to initial heartburn perception and greater sensory intensity rating ($P = 0.03$ and $P = 0.02$, respectively). Compared to those without sleep disturbance, patients with sleep disturbance had greater sensitivity score for capsaicin infusion ($P = 0.04$). Patients with sleep disturbance also had poor sleep efficiency ($P = 0.04$), longer average awakening time ($P = 0.03$), and greater total activity account ($P = 0.04$) in actigraphy measures. There was a positive correlation for the lag time for perceiving capsaicin infusion with total sleep time ($P = 0.03$).

"Our findings suggest that sleep disturbance is associated with esophageal hypersensitivity to capsaicin [infusion](#) in [patients](#) with GERD," the authors write.

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