Insomnia and risk of dementia in the elderly

There are cross-sectional evidences of an association between sleep disorders and cognitive impairment on older adults. However, there is no consensus by means of longitudinal studies data on the increased risk of developing dementia related to insomnia. We conducted a systematic review and meta-analysis to evaluate the risk of incident all-cause dementia in individuals with insomnia in population-based prospective cohort studies. The results showed that insomnia was associated with a significant risk for dementia. In addition, we have data showing that sleep complaints in non-demented elderly, mainly insomnia, provoke phonemic fluency, motor programming, inhibitory control and working memory impairment. All these processes for which sleep complaints determined impairment are cognitive abilities controlled and can be considered executive functions, especially working memory and inhibitory control. Controlled processes as attention, inhibitory control and working memory are linked to the functioning of frontal lobes. Therefore, it is important to consider that the frontal areas are vulnerable for sleep disorders. In addition, sleep disorders increase the risk of cognitive decline. On the other hand, executive functions are predictors of dementia in older adults. These results provide evidences that future studies should investigate dementia prevention among elderly individuals through screening and proper management of insomnia.

Biography

Katie Moraes de Almondes is a Professor in the Department of Psychology at the Federal University of Rio Grande do Norte. She is a Coordinator of Sleep Clinic - Ambuo-no, Coordinator of the Service of Neuropsychology of Aging, and Coordinator of Emergence Psychology Service RN 192 (Mobile Emergency Service). She is the President of the Department of Neuroscience of Sleep Behavior at the Brazilian Association of Sleep. She is also a Member of the Brazilian Society of Neuropsychology (SBNeC) and the Brazilian Society of Neuroscience and Behavior (SBNNeC). She has experience in Psychology of Health, Psychophysiology: human chronobiology, neuropsychology sleep-sleep medicine, neuropsychology of aging, neuroscience and cognitive psychology. She has presented conferences at many Congresses throughout Brazil. She has attended the organization of the events of the Brazilian Congress of Neuropsychology and coordinates the Neuropsychology of Aging and Dementia Congress- CONED. She is author of many papers on subjects including sleep and cognition in elderly. She has published the book entitled, “Counting Sheep: What you need to know for your evening not to turn into a nightmare”. She works as a Counselor of the State Council for the Rights of the Elderly at Rio Grande do Norte, Natal, Brazil (CEDEPI).

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