

Understanding the Psychological and Emotional Aspects of Parasomnia in Adults

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Abstract

Parasomnia disorders are characterized by unusual behaviors, movements and experiences during sleep. While research has primarily focused on the clinical and neurological aspects of parasomnia, this paper explores the less-explored psychological and emotional dimensions of parasomnia in adults. This review aims to shed light on the potential impact of parasomnia on mental well-being and emotional health, offering insights into how these disorders affect the lives of those experiencing them. The findings underline the importance of a comprehensive understanding of parasomnia that encompasses not only the clinical aspects but also the psychological and emotional implications for affected individuals.

Keywords: Parasomnia • Sleep disorders • Psychological impact • Adults

Introduction

Parasomnia disorders are a group of sleep-related disturbances characterized by abnormal behaviors, movements and experiences during sleep. While these disorders have been extensively studied from clinical and neurological perspectives, relatively little attention has been given to their psychological and emotional aspects, particularly in adults. This paper seeks to address this gap by examining how parasomnia may influence the psychological well-being and emotional health of affected individuals [1]. Understanding these dimensions is crucial to provide comprehensive care and support for those living with parasomnia. Parasomnias can disrupt the quality of sleep and may lead to daytime fatigue or injury. While they can occur at any age, they are more common in children and tend to decrease in frequency as individuals grow older. Treatment options for parasomnia in adults may involve improving sleep hygiene, stress management, or, in some cases, medication. Consulting a healthcare professional is essential for a proper diagnosis and tailored management plan [2].

Literature Review

Parasomnia disorders, such as sleepwalking, night terrors and sleep-related eating disorders, have long been the focus of clinical and neurological research. These disorders are often attributed to disturbances in the sleep cycle, including arousals from Non-Rapid Eye Movement (NREM) sleep. However, emerging studies have started to explore the psychological and emotional repercussions of parasomnia in adults. Research suggests that adults with parasomnia may experience heightened levels of anxiety, fear, embarrassment and disrupted sleep patterns, all of which can contribute to decreased overall well-being. In particular, the stigma associated with parasomnia behaviors and the potential for harm during parasomnias can lead to feelings of embarrassment and fear, compounding the psychological impact [3,4].

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Received: 02 October, 2023, Manuscript No. jcnn-23-118865; **Editor Assigned:** 04 October, 2023, PreQC No. P-118865; **Reviewed:** 16 October, 2023, QC No. Q-118865; **Revised:** 23 October 2023, Manuscript No. R-118865; **Published:** 30 October, 2023, DOI: 10.37421/2684-6012.2023.6.196

Discussion

The psychological and emotional impact of parasomnia in adults is a complex and multifaceted issue. Parasomnias can lead to anxiety and fear in those who experience them, primarily due to the potential harm associated with certain parasomnia behaviors. Sleepwalking or night terrors, for instance, can pose physical risks to the affected individuals and those around them, leading to elevated levels of anxiety during the nighttime hours. The stigma attached to parasomnia behaviors, especially when they involve activities that society deems strange or unacceptable, can also result in feelings of embarrassment and shame. Moreover, parasomnia-related sleep disturbances can further exacerbate emotional distress. The disrupted sleep patterns caused by parasomnia episodes can lead to chronic sleep deprivation, which is known to negatively impact mood, cognitive function and overall well-being. This, in turn, can contribute to a cycle of psychological and emotional challenges for those with parasomnia [5,6].

Conclusion

Understanding the psychological and emotional aspects of parasomnia in adults is essential for providing comprehensive care and support for affected individuals. While parasomnia has traditionally been viewed as a primarily clinical and neurological concern, the emerging literature highlights the significant impact on emotional well-being and mental health. The anxiety, fear, embarrassment and sleep disruptions associated with parasomnia underscore the need for a holistic approach to diagnosis and management. Addressing the psychological and emotional aspects of parasomnia requires not only medical interventions but also psychoeducation and support systems that empower individuals to cope with the challenges they face. Further research in this area is warranted to elucidate the extent and nuances of the psychological and emotional impact of parasomnia in adults, ultimately guiding the development of more effective interventions and support strategies for those living with these sleep disorders.

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How to cite this article: Shooli, Diana. "Understanding the Psychological and Emotional Aspects of Parasomnia in Adults." *J Clin Neurol Neurosurg* 6 (2023): 196.