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Snooze e-News!

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News about the Snooze!

This email contains links to articles related to sleep disorders from various websites from the past. For more information on the articles click on the links provided. Please note: News websites may withdraw their articles at any time and archive it on their site.

New Sleep Medication Shows Less Potential to Foster Abuse and Dependence

At the University of Texas Health Science Center in San Antonio, pharmacology researchers led by Charles P. France, PhD, assessed whether ramelteon instigated the same kinds of broad cognitive effects as other, more commonly prescribed sleep aids. That other group includes traditional hypnotics and newer drugs such as zaleplon (Sonata) and zolpidem (Ambien), all of which bind to the brain's benzodiazepine receptors and may result in impaired thinking, hangover, withdrawal symptoms and rebound insomnia.

Laboratory tests and clinical studies also show that even low-dose benzodiazepines, especially in long-term use, create the potential for dependence and abuse. Says Dr. France, "Although medication might not always be indicated for insomnia, when they are prescribed, it is essential to limit the adverse side effects as much as possible."

The authors say that together, the findings highlight significant differences between ramelteon and the prototypical benzodiazepines studied. They say their results, "suggest that ramelteon does not likely share subjective effects with benzodiazepines in humans and, thus, should not be expected to share abuse liability with BZRAs [benzodiazepine receptor agonists]." The findings also indicate that ramelteon will not produce benzodiazepine-like physical dependence in humans. Thus the authors say these findings are potentially important for the treatment of sleep problems.

<http://www.apa.org/journals/releases/bne1203535.pdf>

No, I Don't Mind Working Another Five Hours, I'm sorry, what were we talking about?

What do the Space Shuttle Columbia, Exxon Valdez, and Three-Mile Island disasters have in common? Each was a catastrophe caused by sleep deprivation. What does that have to do with emergency communications work? Sleep deprivation among operators has the same potential for tragedy. As many as 70 million American adults exist in a sleep deprived state. When stress, mandatory overtime, and shift work are added, a detrimental formula affecting the occupational, physical and mental well-being of operators is produced.

Shift work, biology, medical conditions, and stress can all contribute to sleep deprivation. According to the 2005 National Sleep Foundation's (NSF) *Sleep in America* poll, 14% of Americans do shift work. Many work in emergency services. Studies show shift workers are at risk for insomnia, disrupted sleep schedule, reduced performance, irritability and depression. Shift workers also have twice the rate of sleep apnea, a condition characterized by stopped breathing during sleep. Problems appear to stem from shift workers being at odds with their internal clock.

<http://www.officer.com/article/article.jsp?siteSection=3&id=30701>

Lack of sleep linked to high blood pressure

Skimping on sleep over a prolonged period appears to be an important risk factor for developing high blood pressure, according to a report in the medical journal *Hypertension*. "People who sleep for only short durations raise their average 24-hour blood pressure and heart rate," Dr. James E. Gangwisch, from Columbia University in New York, said in a statement. "This may set up the cardiovascular system to operate at an elevated pressure." Previous reports have linked sleep disorders with cardiovascular disease, but it was unclear if sleep deprivation in people who did not have a sleep disorder affected the likelihood of developing hypertension.

The new findings are based on an analysis of data for 4810 subjects, between 32 and 86 years old, who participated in the first National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey. Hypertension was diagnosed in 647 subjects during the follow-up period from 1982 to 1992. <http://go.reuters.com/newsArticle.jhtml?type=healthNews&storyID=11739165&src=rss/healthNews>

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