

Brief Note on Parasomnia and its Types

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DESCRIPTION

Sleep is an essential aspect of human existence, serving as a vital restorative process that allows both body and mind to recuperate and rejuvenate. Yet, within the realm of slumber lies a fascinating and enigmatic phenomenon known as parasomnia. Parasomnias are a group of sleep disorders that encompass a diverse array of unusual behaviors, emotions, and experiences that occur during sleep or during the transition between sleep and wakefulness. From sleepwalking to night terrors, parasomnias offer a captivating window into the complex workings of the human mind while asleep. Parasomnias are characterized by abnormal occurrences during sleep, often leading to behaviors that are unexpected and inexplicable. These episodes can range from mild to severe and may have varying degrees of impact on an individual's sleep quality and overall well-being. The term "parasomnia" originates from the Greek words "para," meaning "alongside," and "somnia," meaning "sleep." This etymology aptly captures the essence of these phenomena, as parasomnias seem to occur alongside or parallel to normal sleep processes. The world of parasomnias is diverse, encompassing a spectrum of intriguing experiences that can be classified into two main categories: non-REM parasomnias and REM parasomnias.

Non-REM parasomnias

Sleepwalking (Somnambulism): One of the most well-known parasomnias, sleepwalking involves walking or performing complex behaviors while asleep. Sleepwalkers may engage in activities that are usually associated with wakefulness, such as getting dressed, eating, or even driving, all while being in a state of partial consciousness.

Night terrors (Sleep terrors): Night terrors are intense episodes of fear or panic that occur during non-REM sleep. Individuals experiencing night terrors may sit up in bed, scream, and exhibit signs of extreme distress, often with little to no memory of the event upon waking.

Sleep talking (Somniloquy): Sleep talking involves uttering words or phrases while asleep. The content of sleep talk can vary widely, from nonsensical utterances to coherent sentences.

Confusional arousals: During confusional arousals, individuals wake up in a state of confusion and disorientation. They may be difficult to rouse fully and might not remember the episode upon awakening.

REM parasomnias

Rapid eye movement sleep Behavior Disorder (RBD): RBD is characterized by the absence of the normal paralysis that typically occurs during REM sleep. As a result, individuals with RBD may physically act out their dreams, which can sometimes be violent or intense.

Nightmare disorder: While nightmares are a common occurrence, nightmare disorder involves frequent and distressing nightmares that significantly disrupt sleep and may lead to feelings of anxiety or fear about going to bed. The origins of parasomnias are complex and can involve a combination of genetic, neurological, and environmental factors. In some cases, medical conditions such as sleep apnea, restless leg syndrome, and certain medications may contribute to the development of parasomnias. Stress, sleep deprivation, and changes in sleep schedule can also trigger or exacerbate these conditions.

Seeking solutions: Managing and treating parasomnias

Managing parasomnias involves a multifaceted approach that considers the underlying causes and aims to improve sleep quality and safety. Treatment options can include lifestyle modifications, such as ensuring a consistent sleep schedule, creating a conducive sleep environment, and managing stress. In cases where parasomnias are severe or disruptive, medical intervention, including medications and cognitive-behavioral therapy, may be recommended. Parasomnias remind us that sleep is not merely a state of rest but a dynamic and intricate process that engages both our bodies and minds in ways that science is still striving to fully comprehend. These intriguing and often perplexing phenomena shed light on the intricate connections between sleep, consciousness, and the depths of human cognition. As researchers continue to delve into the mysteries of parasomnias, our understanding of these enigmatic occurrences may deepen, offering insights not only into the world of sleep but also into the broader realms of neuroscience and psychology. Until then, the world of parasomnias remains a

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captivating arena where the boundaries between wakefulness and slumber blur, leaving us with more questions than answers and

inviting us to explore the hidden intricacies of the human mind during its most vulnerable moments.