

## Men and Women: Are we Different also during Sleeping?

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### Opinion

The answer is yes; we are so different during sleep as much as during awake, as John Gray said in his famous book "MEN are from MARS and WOMEN are from VENUS". Total sleep time is longer in women than in men and sleep disordered breathing disorders are usually seen in older ages in women than in men. When we look at the dreams, men have more aggressive actions in their dreams as we could guess while women have much indoor dreams.

Although we have longer sleep time as "lucky women", unfortunately we could not sleep enough due to internal (hormonal and vasomotor reasons) and external (family responsibilities) factors during lifetime. Also there are some difficult periods disturbing sleep in women's life like menstruation, pregnancy, puerperium and menopause.

Menstruation period is a period in which big hormonal fluctuations are lived, and many sleep disturbances such as premenstrual syndrome, fatigue, concentration difficulty insomnia, hypersomnia, nightmares. These women also might live premenstrual syndrome which makes sleep so bad.

Then pregnancy comes such a period having lots of hormonal and physical changes effecting sleep quality. Total sleep time and short naps usually increase in first trimester. Deep sleep and sleep quality decrease and snoring, periodic leg movements' increase in third trimester and breathing becomes so difficult with the growing belly and its pressure to diaphragm especially during sleep.

In the postpartum period which begins with baby delivery, sleep periods are designed by new baby's sleeping and feeding times. In that

period sleep fragmentation, insomnia, fatigue is usually seen with also postpartum blues and depression.

Menopause composes 1/3 of women life in which many hormonal, physiological, psychological changes have being lived. In menopause, hot flushes, insomnia could be seen as much as 40-60% of women and sleep apnea catches the syndrome frequency like as in men.

Although women live many different periods effecting sleep in their life time, they apply to sleep clinics less than men. Do we ignore them or do they ignore themselves? I think the answer is both yes. Because health workers attribute all classical symptoms of sleep disorders such as snoring, apneas and decreased libido to men and we forget that women also might have these symptoms when they have sleep apnea. Moreover sleep apnea symptoms are more apical in women such as depression, mood changes, insomnia, and usage of sedative drugs.

On the other hand, women especially bin orient populations, become ashamed to tell their symptoms like decreased libido, excessive daytime sleepiness and snoring.

As health workers, we should be careful about sleep disordered breathing problems in women and we should remember that sleep apnea could have different symptoms in women and women have hormonal and sleep fluctuations in their life time. So we should be alert different sleep problems in different periods in women life. Because men and women are so much distinct also in sleeping. Don't forget! Women are from Venus and men are from Mars.

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