

INSOMNIA – PATHOGENESIS AND TREATMENT

Summary

Insomnia generally is defined as a subjective report of difficulty falling sleep, difficulty staying asleep, early awakening, or nonrestorative sleep. It is one of the most common health complaints among the general population.

In pathogenesis of insomnia predisposing, precipitating, and perpetuating factors play an important role. Predisposing factors include arousal-prone personality, elevated baseline physiologic arousal, rigid circadian system, and other individual characteristics that make one vulnerable to or set the stage for the development of insomnia. Precipitating factors are the events or conditions that trigger the insomnia. Common examples include life stressors and change of sleep-wake schedule. The perpetuat-

ing factors, such as conditioning of bedtime cues with arousal, maladaptive sleep-wake habits and worries over sleeplessness, then should become the focus of the treatment.

Pharmacologic and non-pharmacological methods of treatment are used in the management of insomnia. In the case of the diagnosis of transient or short-term insomnia, a basic method of treatment is usually administering the right hypnotics and information on the sleep hygiene. In chronic insomnia, a basic treatment is cognitive-behavioral therapy (CBT), which can help pharmacologically by regular use of “sedative and hypnotic” antidepressant medication in the evening only “as needed” taking hypnotics drugs (no more than 2-3 times a week).