**04-028**

**Elderly people recently prescribed sleeping pills are at DOUBLE the risk of a broken hip, study finds**

* **Taking hypnotics raises the risk by 20% in those receiving the drugs for 30 days**
* **Sleep-inducing drugs cause drowsiness, delayed reactions and poor balance**
* **Pensioners should reduce their risk by strength training and minimising hazards**

By [Alexandra Thompson Health Reporter For Mailonline](http://www.dailymail.co.uk/home/search.html?s=&authornamef=Alexandra+Thompson+Health+Reporter+For+Mailonline)

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* [e-mail](mailto:?subject=Read%20this:%20Elderly%20people%20recently%20prescribed%20sleeping%20pills%20are%20at%20DOUBLE%20the%20risk%20of%20a%20broken%20hip,%20study%20finds&body=Elderly%20people%20recently%20prescribed%20sleeping%20pills%20are%20at%20DOUBLE%20the%20risk%20of%20a%20broken%20hip%2C%20study%20finds%0A%0ATaking%20benzodiazepines%20and%20so-called%20%27z-drugs%27%20increases%20the%20risk%20of%20a%20fracture%20by%2053%20per%20cent%20after%2015%20to%2030%20days%2C%20according%20to%20researchers%20at%20Cardiff%20University%20and%20King%27s%20College%20London.%0A%0Ahttp%3A%2F%2Fwww.dailymail.co.uk%2Fhealth%2Farticle-4448412%2FSleeping-pills-double-risk-broken-hip-14-days.html%3Fito%3Demail_share_article-top%0A%0A%0AMost%20Read%20Articles%3A%0A%0ASecrets%20to%20a%20celebrity%20body%3A%20Trainer%20to%20Jennifer%20Aniston%2C%20Julia%20Roberts%20and%20Drew%20Barrymore%20reveals%20how%20YOU%20can%20get%20an%20A-list%20figure%0Ahttp%3A%2F%2Fwww.dailymail.co.uk%2Fhealth%2Farticle-4559850%2FTrainer-Jennifer-Aniston-gives-tips.html%3Fito%3Demail_share_article-top_most-read-articles%0A%0AWould%20you%20put%20ground-up%20WASP%20NESTS%20in%20your%20vagina%3F%20Gynecologist%20warns%20against%20dangerous%20new%20trend%20that%20promises%20to%20tighten%2C%20clean%20and%20rejuvenate%20your%20genitals%0Ahttp%3A%2F%2Fwww.dailymail.co.uk%2Fhealth%2Farticle-4560228%2FWomen-putting-ground-wasp-nests-vagina-tighten-it.html%3Fito%3Demail_share_article-top_most-read-articles%0A%0A%27Alien%27%20baby%20born%20with%204%20LEGS%20has%20her%20extra%20limbs%20removed%20during%20a%20complex%20operation%0Ahttp%3A%2F%2Fwww.dailymail.co.uk%2Fhealth%2Farticle-4559130%2FAlien-baby-born-4-LEGS-finally-normal.html%3Fito%3Demail_share_article-top_most-read-articles%0A%0A)

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Elderly people recently prescribed sleeping pills are at risk of breaking their hips, new research suggests.

Taking the common hypnotics benzodiazepines and so-called 'z-drugs' more than doubles the risk of a fracture within just two weeks.

This is thought to due to them inducing drowsiness, delayed reaction times and impaired balance.

As many as 1.5 million in the UK people depend on benzodiazepines to get some shut eye.

Benzodiazepines act on the central nervous system to induce sleep, while 'z-drugs' also treat insomnia, but are of a different class.

Researchers at Cardiff University and King's College London analysed people aged over 65 who had newly been prescribed hypnotic medicines, as well as those not taking such treatments.

Participants who had been taken sleep-inducing drugs from 15 to 30 days had around a 53 per cent higher risk of developing a hip fracture.

Taking the medication for more than 30 days increased the risk by 20 per cent.

Study author Dr Ben Carter, said: 'While 'Z-drugs are fast becoming the doctor's hypnotic prescription of choice, there is no evidence that they are a safer alternative to benzodiazepines in relation to hip fracture risk.

'Our study shows that both appear to significantly increase the risk of hip fracture when newly prescribed by doctors.'

The researchers advise the findings, published in PLOS ONE, should make patients receiving the medications more aware of their risk.

Dr Carter said: 'Careful consideration of the immediate increased risk of hip fracture should inform the clinical decision-making process.

'Clinically effective measures like strength training to improve frailty, removal of hazards at home, visual correction and a medication review are also needed to mitigate the risk of hip fractures, particularly in the first few days of use.'

The research supports previous studies linking use of hypnotics by older people with an increased risk of accidents, dependence, cognitive decline and hip fracture.

Sleep-inducing drugs are thought to cause drowsiness, delayed reaction times and impaired balance.

Sufferers of fractured hips are known to be at an increased risk of heart problems, pneumonia and blood clots following surgery.

While the broken hip itself can make someone dramatically more frail by the disability it causes them.

This comes after researchers from Stanford University, California, found taking prescription painkillers with sleep medication increases the risk of an overdose.

Combining opioids with benzodiazepines was linked to more hospital visits for the potentially fatal complication, they revealed.

Read more: <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/health/article-4448412/Sleeping-pills-double-risk-broken-hip-14-days.html#ixzz4ilhEgLNY>   
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