

Sleep Disorders & Insomnia

Overview:

Sleep disorders are conditions that affect the ability to sleep well on a regular basis. Insomnia, a common disorder, is the persistent difficulty in falling or staying asleep, leading to fatigue and impaired functioning.

Symptoms:

- Difficulty falling asleep or staying asleep.
- Daytime sleepiness and fatigue.
- Irritability, poor concentration, and memory problems.
- Anxiety or depressive symptoms.

Causes:

- Stress, academic workload, or emotional disturbances.
- Poor sleep hygiene: irregular schedules, screen exposure before bed.
- Medical conditions: pain, sleep apnea, or neurological disorders.
- Substance use: caffeine, alcohol, nicotine.

Effects:

- Cognitive impairment and decreased academic performance.
- Mood disturbances like irritability or depression.
- Increased risk of physical health issues (heart disease, obesity).
- Weak immune system and slower recovery from illness.

Coping Strategies:

- **Sleep Hygiene:** Maintain a regular sleep-wake schedule, limit screens before bed.
- **Relaxation Techniques:** Meditation, deep breathing, progressive muscle relaxation.
- **Environment:** Dark, quiet, cool bedroom with a comfortable mattress.
- **Limiting Stimulants:** Avoid caffeine or heavy meals before bedtime.
- **Professional Support:** Sleep therapy or medication if chronic insomnia occurs.

Extra Tips:

- Keep a sleep diary to track patterns and triggers.
- Engage in light physical exercise in the day.
- Use calming bedtime routines like reading or soft music.

Case Example:

A student struggling with late-night study sessions experienced insomnia and fatigue. By implementing a consistent bedtime, mindfulness exercises, and limiting phone usage at night, sleep quality improved, and daytime focus increased.