Sleep Strategies: Sleep in Women A Changing Perspective

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Sleep in Women: A Changing Perspective

Brian J. Whipp, PhD, DSc, died on October 20, 2007, at the University of Wales Hospital in Cardiff, Wales, United Kingdom.

Dr. Whipp received his PhD in physiology from Stanford University, and he then set out on what was to become an illustrious career in physiology, both as a research investigator and a teacher. He taught at the Harbor-UCLA Medical Center in Torrance, California, proceeding through the academic ranks becoming Professor of Physiology and Medicine and Vice-Chairman of UCLA’s Department of Physiology. During this period, he was awarded an Established Investigation of the American Heart Association and was a Visiting Research Scientist at Oxford University. In 1992, he returned to the United Kingdom to become Professor and Chairman of the Physiology Department at the University of London’s St. George’s Hospital Medical School.

Dr. Whipp was a recipient of the ACCP Distinguished Scientist Honor Lecture Award in 2007. Dr. Whipp was a well-respected and recognized researcher with interests centered on the control of ventilation and pulmonary gas exchange during exercise in health and disease, with special reference to the nonsteady state. In addition to more than 300 publications on these topics, he was author or coauthor of nine books and monographs. He was also an accomplished teacher, combining scientific rigor with humor, wit, and enthusiasm.

Dr. Whipp retired from the University of London’s St. George’s Hospital Medical School in 2001. He remained active since that time, working from his home in the Welsh village of Crickhowell and presenting many invited lectures worldwide.

In Remembrance

It is not all bad news for the fairer sex, though. Women have a longer total sleep time albeit a longer sleep latency, less stage 2 sleep, and more slow wave sleep than age-matched men (Ohayon et al. Sleep. 2004;27(7):1255). Also, women with sleep-disordered breathing do not have an increased risk of motor vehicle accidents when compared with their well-rested female counterparts, even when controlled for age, alcohol use, and miles driven. This is in stark contrast with men who snore and those with an apnea-hypopnea index $>$ 5/h, who are at three times the risk of a motor vehicle accident compared with similar healthy control subjects (Young et al. Sleep. 1997;20(6):608). It is unknown whether this is due to a predominantly male instinct to ignore potentially dangerous sleepiness and get behind the wheel or an actual difference between the sexes in resistance to impairment of consciousness and motor skills consequent to sleep-disordered breathing.

Given that we are now more cognizant of the differences in sleep physiology and architecture between the sexes, and indeed within the life cycle of women, the onus is on present and future researchers in sleep medicine to study large samples of women to better identify clinically relevant causes and outcomes of sleep disruption.

Lessons for January

- **Nonspecific Intestinal Pneumonia: A Review Article.** By Dr. Mary E. Strek, FCCP, and Dr. Imre Neth, FCCP
- **Inhaled Nitric Oxide: Therapeutic Uses and Potential Hazards.** By Ivan Katz, RRT
- **Imaging and Differential Diagnosis of Cystic Lung Disease.** By Dr. Isabel B. Oliver, Dr. Danielle Antin-Ozerkis; and Dr. Ami N. Rubinstein

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