Teaching NeuroImages:

Excessive fragmentary hypnic myoclonus

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Figure Polysomnography

In most patients, excess of the fragmentary hypnic myoclonus is a polysomnographic EMG finding (gray arrows) and does not manifest physically as the twitches are very fine and brief. In our patient no physical twitches were seen in the video (not shown). It is most commonly seen in non-REM sleep but in our patient it was seen in both non-REM (A) and REM (B) phases of sleep. EOG = electrooculogram; R-R = R-R interval.

Polysomnography in a 75-year-old man with insomnia and poor sleep revealed mild snoring and no sleep apnea (figure). Intermittent arrhythmic and asynchronic myoclonic movements were recorded on

EMG leads during non-REM as well as REM phases of sleep without associated abnormal behavior.

Fragmentary hypnic myoclonus (FHM) is a physiologic motor phenomenon consisting of muscle twitches of

fingers, toes, or angle of mouth during sleep.¹ A pathologic excess of the FHM is called EFHM. EFHM is a non-REM phenomenon that has also been reported in REM sleep.² It can represent an isolated polysomnographic finding or be associated with sleep apnea, excessive daytime drowsiness, insomnia, or REM behavior disorder.

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