understanding of the workforce situation in the state or community in which they work.

© 2014 American Academy of Neurology


FATIGUE IN THE ACUTE PHASE AFTER FIRST STROKE PREDICTS POORER PHYSICAL HEALTH 18 MONTHS LATER

Tiffany J. Braley, Devin L. Brown, Ronald D. Chervin, Ann Arbor, MI: Lerdal and Gay1 examined a key relationship between acute poststroke fatigue and long-term functional outcomes. We wonder though whether sleep disorders, and obstructive sleep apnea (OSA) in particular, could help to explain the reported observations.

Given the high prevalence of OSA in acute stroke,2 we were surprised that data on OSA or OSA symptoms were not presented. Previous studies have shown that OSA is a risk factor for poor poststroke outcomes.3 Sleep disturbances, including OSA, impair health-related quality of life measures such as the Short Form–36.4

Furthermore, despite traditional emphasis on sleepiness as a consequence of sleep apnea, many patients with OSA report that problems with fatigue, tiredness, or lack of energy supersede their problems with sleepiness.5

Taken together, these findings raise the possibility that poorer physical outcomes in this cohort could be explained or exacerbated by an underlying sleep disorder and that acute poststroke fatigue may represent a consequence of poor sleep. Next steps in the important research that Lerdal et al. have initiated should consider OSA as a potential causal link between poststroke fatigue and 18-month physical functioning.

Author Response: Anners Lerdal, Oslo; Caryl L. Gay, San Francisco: Braley et al. asked whether sleep disorders, particularly OSA, might explain the association between acute phase fatigue and poorer physical health 18 months after stroke. Although OSA was not specifically assessed in our study, we previously reported that fatigue during the acute phase was not associated with either the Pittsburgh Sleep Quality Index6 or actigraph estimates of nighttime sleep disturbance.7 Thus, it seems unlikely that the fatigue patients experienced during the acute phase was solely attributable to sleep disturbance. Nonetheless, given the prevalence of OSA in acute stroke, we agree that this possible mechanism warrants further investigation using specific OSA assessments.

© 2014 American Academy of Neurology


WriteClick: Rapid Online Correspondence

Have a comment on a recent Neurology® article you would like to share? Now it is easier and more convenient. Neurology.org has launched WriteClick on the home page and sidebars of each article to encourage remarks and debate among users.

WriteClick is restricted to comments about studies published in Neurology within the last eight weeks.

Learn more at http://www.neurology.org/letters
Fatigue in the acute phase after first stroke predicts poorer physical health 18 months later

Tiffany J. Braley, Anners Lerdal, Devin L. Brown, et al.

Neurology 2014;82;2255
DOI 10.1212/01.wnl.0000451546.39304.b9

This information is current as of June 16, 2014