

# Insomnia: why is it common?

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## ABSTRACT

Insomnia is a disorder where a person suffers from the lack of sleep or finds himself in the position of restlessness. It's a paradox of constant unrest in deportment and puts mass variations in well-being causing mental health issues and downcast in health conditions. Lately, the cases of insomnia have increased worldwide and there has been noted a specific increase in number of adolescents facing it. Nevertheless, every problem has a solution and same is right to say in case of insomnia. Relaxation Techniques, exercises, avoiding caffeine, consulting therapist etc, are some renowned ways for curing insomnia.

**Keywords:** Insomnia, psychiatrist, disorder, paradox, mental health, adolescent, therapist, Alzheimer's disease, Parkinsons disease, thyroid problems

## INTRODUCTION

Stephanie Sue has had sleep issues since ever since she joined elementary school. "I was the only 8-year-old I knew who couldn't fall asleep until after midnight," says Stephanie, now a 33-year-old licensed clinical psychologist in New York. She elaborates on her insomnia by stating, "It feels like my mind is going a mile a minute and my body is in fight-or-flight mode. I'm ready to run a marathon, when I'm really supposed to go to bed." She emphasizes on her condition by articulating that being unable to sleep, causes her a great amount of stress and anxiety. Having a healthy sleep routine changed the scenario for her. "Its really meditation that changed my relationship with sleep", Stephanie says. "When I can't sleep, I repeat to myself how lucky I am to have this space and how grateful I am to have 8 hours to just relax. Expressing gratitude and being present in the moment promotes a positive mood and relaxation. At a certain point, my mindset shifted: I don't resent this time anymore." The same story is shared by numerous people around the globe.

## METHODOLOGY

Most adults sleep for 7 to 9 hours a night. Children and babies may sleep for much longer than this, whereas older adults may sleep less. What's important is whether you feel you get enough sleep, and whether your sleep is good quality. The first question that rings a person's mind when he acknowledges this disorder is frequently: "Why do people even get insomnia?". The answer to this question is quite simple, they don't get insomnia, they already have it. The condition may differ from individual to individual. There has been seen a genetic passing of this disorder from generation to generation. It may also occur due to increase in stress levels, family pressure or due to occurrence of a traumatic incident from past which continues to leave an imprint in present life. Un- comfort in subsistence, high usage of alcohol, drugs or caffeine are also some factors which may lead to unshakable insomnia or simply put in a state of unrest leading to less sleeping hours. If a person already suffers from another disorder which affects his life, its quite likely for that person to fall into the hands of insomnia as well.

In fact, an irregular sleep schedule or simply having less rest hours lead to this disorder as well. People are often needed to be reminded of the fact that 8 hours of a day are specially reserved for providing rest to our body, this time is indeed valuable and must be used wisely instead of being tossed away. The environment a person lives in matters a lot in such cases. People living in a noisy city are more prone to insomnia than people living in a countryside or quitter regions. While psychological and physical factors prevail, there also is a room for mental factors such as concern for work, home, school, health, money, love or thoughts about family which keep you up at night are also a well-known facet when it comes to lack of sleep in general.

The fact that astonishes people the most is that this disorder can arise genetically. Stunned right? Here's the thing: your genes are evolving. And when a specific thing evolves, it not only changes itself but sometimes intends to change the environment around it too. Most of the genetic changes that occur result simply due to failures in normal mechanisms by which genomes are copied or repaired when damaged. This is where the term 'DNA' comes into significance. When DNA divides itself during cell division and allows the cells to make replicas of themselves, it can sometimes change its way of dividing or sequence. This is called genetic mutation. Genetic mutations can cause certain disorders, cancer or even make a creature adaptable to harsher environments. These mutations can cause a change in the PRNP gene. PRNP gene is a chemical responsible for making PRP proteins which are needed in the functioning of the brain and other tissues. Mutations in this gene can lead to severe insomnia, causing neurodegenerative diseases such as Alzheimer's disease.

While people of all age's can be agonized by this disorder, much of the population going through it is of teenagers. As much as parents worry about it, most teenage cases of insomnia occur due to hormonal changes. "Teens experience a natural shift in circadian rhythm", says John Hopkins, sleep expert Laura Sterni M.D. This makes it more difficult for them to fall asleep before 11 pm. Adding in the school stress of homework, extra-curriculars, electronic devices, and sometimes even a part time job can pave the way for sleep deprivations. During puberty, the body's internal clock shifts, making it harder to fall asleep before 11 PM. This is because the brain produces melatonin later at night than in children and adults. It is quite common for your 15-year-old to be awake till midnight but not so common for him to forget about sleep entirely. While sleep deprivations are considered quite common, the chances of your teen developing insomnia aren't thin either. If a teen experiences long hour of restlessness during the night or has trouble falling asleep, then medical examination must be conducted to ensure that insomnia hasn't affected him. As much as people hate to hear about it, it must be said that somewhere we're the ones responsible for the things that affect us. Let's take a real-life example to explain this, you work in a corporate as a secretary general and daily have some papers left to examine. You neglect your daily schedule every day and mess up with your sleep time. You worked till the dawn and now have under bags beneath your eyes. However, its not a big deal, right? We are fortunate enough to complete the work, nevertheless. Your work has been completed but unfortunately, same could not have been said about you. You're desperately looking for a rest period but now your mind has been adapted to such a phase that you no longer feel the same disparity to sleep. Voila! You just got one step closer to developing insomnia.

Ongoing pain, cancer, diabetes, heart diseases, asthma, Alzheimer's disease, Parkinsons disease, thyroid problems etc are some other diseases which can lead to insomnia. When a patient feels discomfort, he is likely to stay awake for long hours. If the diseases stay for long, it is quite likely for him to develop insomnia out of it. Many mental health problems such as depression, anxiety, mania etc, can all lead to sleepless nights. Any specific medication can also cause insomnia. Medicines may have positive impacts

on the body however, negative impacts cannot be neglected, especially in such a case that affects life (restlessness).

Insomnia can cause a person to feel drowsy during the day, making it hard to focus, pay attention and learn. This drowsiness, much considered as ‘not important’ can have lethal after-effects. It can cause laziness during driving, resulting in an increase of risk of car accidents. This may result in increased blood pressure and strokes. This further, may result in injuries and shocks, especially if you operate heavy machinery. Another backlog is obesity. Our body has a hormone called ‘leptin’. Leptin helps you to feel full; ghrelin keeps you hungry. Leptin levels usually rise during your sleep. Now in the case of insomnia, human body isn’t getting enough sleep. Due to lack of sleep, your leptin levels decrease, making you feel more starvation than already, resulting in increase in body fat and weight gain.

Now, did you know that your brain is capable of ‘microsleeping’? Microsleeping means a state of sleeping for a few seconds without realizing it. Guess what? This is quite common in insomnia. If you’re a patient of insomnia and you’re driving and suddenly your brain is microsleeping, you’ll realize it too late and get into a road accident without any warnings.

According to studies, the prevalence of insomnia in India is estimated to be between 13.8% to 33%, meaning roughly one in four Indians go through insomnia, with a recent analysis finding a 25.7% prevalence rate across the country. The overall prevalence of clinical insomnia is 12.13% (moderate one 11.11% and severe insomnia with 1.02%), and that of subthreshold insomnia is 31.97%. The metropolitan cities like New Delhi, Mumbai and Bengaluru are the ones reported with most cases of insomnia per year. Stress, work pressure, irregular sleep schedules, and the use of technology before sleep are commonly cited reasons in these areas.

If we analyze these statistics around the globe, we realize that roughly, 1 in 3 adults worldwide suffer through sleep disorders like insomnia, and about 10% adults meet the criteria for insomnia. An estimated 8% predicted are suffering from chronic insomnia and 14% suffer from clinical insomnia in any given year, representing approximately 41.6m and 72.1m working-age adults. The country most affected by insomnia cases is Japan with 20-30% population having chronic insomnia.

After all this brainstorming, a man thinks ‘Then what do we ought to do to prevent this?’ Well, the answer is as simple as the question. Just having a basic sleeping time of 10 pm to 6 am can ensure a healthy life for every individual. Avoiding substances like caffeine, nicotine and alcohol can cause more vigor in lifestyle. Making your sleep space comfortable is also crucial. Sleeping in quiet, peaceful surrounding is also salient. Usually, the cause of waking during night is due to recent use of electronic devices. One needs to shut off their phones at least 20 minutes before bedtime. Another reason for insomnia is excessive sleep during the day. Many may not actually believe it but its true that sleeping during the day can make you sleepless during the night, messing up your sleep schedule and thus causing, restlessness and abnormal tiredness. Avoid sleeping during afternoon, however, in case of tiredness, small naps are helpful.

But what about the people who already face insomnia? For such cases, cognitive therapy or exercises can prove beneficial. It can help you identify and correct inappropriate thoughts and beliefs that may contribute to insomnia. Trying relaxation techniques and stress reduction methods before going to bed, such as progressive muscle relaxation, deep breathing, imagery, meditation, or biofeedback.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Insomnia is a widespread condition influenced by genetic, environmental, and lifestyle factors, affecting about 1 in 3 adults globally. It often results from stress, irregular sleep schedules, and environmental noise,

with cities like New Delhi and Tokyo showing high prevalence rates. Genetic mutations, such as those in the PRNP gene, can increase susceptibility, while teens experience insomnia due to hormonal changes and academic pressures. Insomnia is linked to serious health issues, including obesity, cardiovascular disease, and mental health disorders like anxiety and depression. Effective management includes maintaining regular sleep schedules, reducing caffeine, and practicing relaxation techniques to improve sleep quality.

## CONCLUSION

Insomnia is a complex and multifaceted disorder that affects a significant portion of the global population, driven by genetic, environmental, psychological, and lifestyle factors. Its impacts are far-reaching, influencing both physical and mental health, and leading to issues such as obesity, cardiovascular diseases, mental health disorders, and increased accident risks. While insomnia can stem from factors like genetic mutations or chronic diseases, many cases arise due to stress, poor sleep hygiene, and modern lifestyle choices. Addressing these root causes through lifestyle adjustments, stress management, and cognitive behavioural therapies can help mitigate the effects of insomnia. Prevention and intervention require a holistic approach, with emphasis on creating healthier sleep environments, educating individuals about the importance of proper sleep schedules, and reducing the use of stimulants before bed. Ultimately, prioritizing sleep is essential for maintaining overall health and well-being.

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