



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

World Association of Sleep Medicine

Contacts: Dr. Antonio Culebras - aculebras@aol.com +1-315-492-5877
Liborio Parrino – liborio.parrino@unipr.it
Allan O’Bryan – obryan@wasmonline.org +1-507-206-1235

March 11th, 2014 — Feeling less alert today? Reaching for that extra cup of coffee to stay awake? Your health and sleep habits may be contributing to a lack of good quality sleep, which can lead to other health issues.

On Friday, March 14, 2014, World Sleep Day will be celebrated all over the globe. This annual event is a celebration of sleep and a call to action on important issues related to sleep.

This year’s theme is “Restful Sleep, Easy Breathing, Healthy Body,” a three-in-one message highlighting the preventable risk factors for obstructive sleep apnea. Let’s take a look at each statement in this year’s slogan.

Restful Sleep — How do you know if you’re getting restful sleep?

Good, restorative sleep is continuous and uninterrupted, deep, and of adequate length. If you achieve all of these, you should feel rested and alert throughout the day.

If you’re missing one or more element, your concentration, productivity, attention and alertness will suffer. Daytime sleepiness can also be dangerous, leading to motor vehicle accidents.

Easy Breathing — People with obstructive sleep apnea may not realize how many times they’re waking up during the night, but if your airway isn’t open enough, you’re not getting good sleep.

“When breathing in sleep is an effort, quality sleep is reduced,” says Antonio Culebras, M.D., professor of neurology at SUNY, Upstate Medical University in Syracuse, New York and co-chair of the World Sleep Day Committee.

(continues)

One of the most significant risk factors for sleep apnea is being overweight or obese. Extra accumulations of fat in the upper airway can reduce the throat opening, while a large abdomen can interfere with the pumping action of the diaphragm. Recent studies have shown that losing weight alone can eliminate sleep apnea in some overweight people.

Other risk factors for sleep apnea include smoking, which can damage the throat, and large tonsils, particularly in children. Quitting smoking or getting large tonsils surgically removed can cure sleep apnea and prevent the complications of daytime sleepiness.

Healthy Body

Not only can getting healthy lead to better sleep — the same principle works in reverse. Better sleep leads to better health.

Being alert and rested can make you feel more motivated to get regular exercise and eat healthfully, while lack of sleep can leave you feeling lethargic and too tired to move. What's more, studies have shown that lack of sleep for just a few days disrupts hormone and metabolism levels, resulting in increased appetite and calorie intake.

World Sleep Day 2014

World Sleep Day is organized by the World Association of Sleep Medicine (WASM), an international association whose mission is to advance sleep health worldwide. For practical steps to start your journey toward quality sleep, check out WASM's 10 Commandments of Sleep found at www.worldsleepday.org.

This year, WASM is emphasizing the preventable risk factors that lead to obstructive sleep apnea with the slogan "Restful Sleep, Easy Breathing, Healthy Body."

You can participate in World Sleep Day by becoming a delegate.

Last year, World Sleep Day delegates worked locally to spread awareness of sleep issues by hosting special events, creating and distributing booklets and pamphlets on sleep, hosting school events for children, making promotional videos, and translating World Sleep Day materials into other languages.

For more information on World Sleep Day, including additional media resources, go to www.worldsleepday.org.

References

1. Mandal M, Hart N. Respiratory complications of obesity. *Clinical Medicine* 2012; 12(1): 75-8.
2. Foster E. Uncovering sleep apnea misconceptions. *The Nurse Practitioner* 2008; 33(6): 22-28.
3. Boehlecke BA. Epidemiology and pathogenesis of sleep-disordered breathing. *Curr Opin Pulm Med* 2000; 6: 471-478.

###