



CRITICAL CARE, PULMONARY & SLEEP

A S S O C I A T E S A PROFESSIONAL LLP

Narcolepsy

Problem

Narcolepsy is a neurological disorder characterized by disproportionate daytime sleepiness and a sudden inability to move (cataplexy). This results from the brain's failure to synchronize normal sleep-wake cycles, possibly due to a hypocretin (regulates wakefulness, arousal and appetite) deficiency.

A person with narcolepsy may experience periods of sleepiness rarely or many times a day. Emotion can initiate the episodes, which ordinarily last no longer than 30 minutes, sometimes less.

Although those with narcolepsy characteristically sleep no more hours than the average person, they have no control over when the sleep occurs.

Symptoms

Those with narcolepsy may experience one or more of the following signs, ranging from mild to severe:

Extreme sleepiness in the daytime

Muddled mental state

Fatigue

Lack of energy

Depression

Sudden falling sleep (while in conversation, eating or engaged in other activities)

Loss of muscle tone (cataplexy) while awake

Sleep paralysis

Hallucinations

Insufficient nighttime sleep

Automatic behavior (continuing an activity while asleep)