

Sleepwalking essay sample



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Sleepwalking is a psychological disorder most common in young children and adolescents (Alvarado, 1998). It is characterized by a person walking or doing another activity while he or she is technically asleep (Alvarado, 1998). Non-comprehensive vocalizations might happen, but the sleepwalker often maintains a vague blank look on the face. Causes of Sleepwalking The exact cause of sleepwalking in young children has not yet been established; but psychological research points out that fatigue, lack of enough sleep and general anxiety could be the causes (University of Maryland Medical Center, 2002).

In adults, sleepwalking is commonly associated with mental disorders, depressive illnesses, reaction to alcohol and drug abuse or medical conditions such as partial complex seizures (University of Maryland Medical Center, 2002). When it occurs in elderly people, it may be a symptom of a brain syndrome or Rapid Eye Movement (REM) disorders. A genetic connection has been identified with sleepwalking. Symptoms When people sleepwalk, they usually get up while still in get slumber and walk around while looking like they are actually awake (University of Maryland Medical Center, 2002).

A sleepwalker will often unconsciously undertake complex routines like rearranging furniture, cooking, dressing, undressing or even driving. If undisturbed, a sleepwalker will usually go back to sleep, even if on a different location. He or she will not remember the sleepwalking episode after finally waking up, and will act aggressively if woken in the middle of it. Treatment Most victims of the sleepwalking disorder do not need specific

treatment since it is not a serious disorder (University of Maryland Medical Center, 2002).

It is however important to put in place safety mechanisms like moving live cables or obstacles when a sleepwalker is in the house. It is not dangerous to wake a sleepwalker. Adults who exhibit the disorder should avoid alcohol or any other substances that depress the central nervous system. It is also necessary to avoid fatigue and to prevent insomnia as well as any causes of stress, anxiety and conflict (Alvarado, 1998).