

Narcolepsy case essay sample



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Imagine falling asleep behind the wheel waiting for a green light or at work, as it has happened to many people. Sleeping disorders are more common than most individuals might think. An estimated 200, 000 Americans are chronically ill with various sleep disorders and fewer than 50, 000 are diagnosed (Walsleben and Baron-Faust). Narcolepsy is often mistaken for a depression or people often blame side effects of medication they are taking for their excessive sleepiness. People who have problems in sleep and staying awake during the day not only affect themselves but also those of their families and friends. Many people who have sleeping disorders are unaware of the fact that they have a problem. One of the most common and crucial sleeping disorders is Narcolepsy. Narcolepsy is a frequent disorder. It is the second leading cause of excessive daytime sleepiness. This author believes that people who are sleepy are not lazy, bored, or unmotivated, but because they have a serious sleep disorder that needs to be take care of soon. It is important to understand what Narcolepsy is, the symptoms, what a person with Narcolepsy may experience during sleep and treatments available for Narcolepsy.

Narcolepsy is a sleep disorder that presents excessive daytime sleepiness that can cause a lot of harm to people (Hauri and Linde). The exact cause of this sleep disorder is not known. The main characteristic of Narcolepsy is excessive and overwhelming sleepiness, even if the person had a good nighttime sleep. Moreover, a person with this sleep disorder is likely to become drowsy or fall asleep, many times at inappropriate times and places. Levels of sleepiness can be so drastic that people with Narcolepsy may fall asleep in the middle of a conversation, while driving, or while eating a meal

(Walsleben and Baron-Faust). Daytime sleep may occur often without any warning signs and may times it can be irresistible. These attacks can occurs several times in a day. In many cases, people with Narcolepsy tend to forget things they have done after falling asleep. For example, if the person made a phone call or did chores he or she will not remember. Many people with this sleep disorder often find it difficult to keep jobs and even relationships.

In addition, people with this sleeping disorder may experience several wakening during the night. Narcolepsy can occur in both men and women at any age, although the symptoms usually are first noticed in teenagers or young adults. There is strong evidence that Narcolepsy may run in families. According to Hauri and Linde “ 8 to 12 percent of people with Narcolepsy have a family member with the disease.” Large majorities of people with this problem are often diagnosed after many years since the first symptom. People think the reason for being so tired is due to stress in their everyday life. In most cases, people are diagnosed to prevent a dramatic impact on their personal life. According to (Walsleben and Baron-Faust) “ It is estimated that in the United States about 250, 000 people have Narcolepsy.

Statistics show that 6 out every 1000 people in the world have this sleeping disorder.” Narcolepsy can be diagnosed by staying overnight in a sleep laboratory. The sleep specialist will record the patient’s sleep and observe the number of times he or she wakes up. Two tests are used in diagnosing the sleep disorder. They are Polysomnogram and Multiple Sleep Latency Test. “ The Polysomnogram is the recording of sleep brain waves and a number of nerve and muscle functions (Hauri and Linde).

When the patient is tested her or she falls asleep rapidly and in many cases the patient may awaken several times. This procedure also helps the sleep specialist to detect other possible sleep disorders. For the Multiple Sleep Latency Test a person is given the chance to sleep every 2 hours. In the procedure, the sleep specialist observes the time it takes the patient to wake up or react to the test. In addition, this test measures the amount of daytime sleepiness of the patient. According to Hauri and Linde “ An alert person might fall asleep once during the four nap times, say after lunch. A diagnosis of excessive sleepiness is made if the patient falls asleep on each of the four nap times in an average of five minutes or less.”