

Night terrors

Business



Night terrors are common sleep problems among children.

This paper will analyze about night terrors, also called sleep terrors, a condition that is usually known to affect small children although cases of adults being affected by the condition have been reported. Night Terrors According to Iannelli, night terrors are common sleep disruptions that usually affect small children of 2-6 years but can occur at any age. It is estimated that about 15 percent of these young children experience night terrors. Although considered to be normal, night terrors are often very scary and can be very distressing to parents who may overreact during a child's first night of terror. The condition causes feelings of terror and usually occurs in the first few hours of sleep.

The terror is almost similar to a nightmare but with more remarkable presentation (MedlinePlus). Causes of Night Terror Night terrors are caused by the following: Fever Sleep deprivation Stressful life events Medications affecting the brain or the central nervous system (emedinehealth). Night Terrors Symptoms Night terrors are usually common around midnight or at 2 a. m. and children rarely can explain what happened the next morning. Some of the symptoms associated with night terrors are: Increased breathing rate Increased heart rate Sweating during night terrors episodes Have mydriatic pupils A typical night terror usually begins after 90 minutes of falling asleep.

The affected child will then sit in bed screaming and be appearing awake but very confused and impassive to stimuli. Although the child may seem awake, he/she is unable to recognize those who are present and usually they do not

talk nor respond to comforting by the parents. Most night terror episodes last about 1-2 minutes but sometimes they can last up to 30 minutes before the child can relax and sleep normally (emedicinehealth). Diagnosis Diagnosis of the condition is made by history of the child waking in the night, screaming uncontrollably and cannot be consoled. Night terrors may be confused with nightmares but a child having nightmares can be woken up and consoled (Iannelli).

If other disorders are assumed, then additional tests may be useful to exclude them including test to measure brain activity and a polysomnography but CT and MRI scans are not necessary (emedicinehealth). When to Seek Medical Help During a child's first years of life, night terrors may be a parents' biggest concern. It is estimated that half of children develop a serious sleep disruptions that may merit doctor assistance. Children at the age of 3? years, which is the peak period for night terrors, experience at least 1 night terror a week while older children experience 1-2 night terror episodes a month (WebMD Children's Health Center). Treatment of Night Terrors Usually there is no treatment necessary for night terrors because night terrors are often triggered in children who are overtired.

To help prevent night terrors, parents are advised that they stick to a good bedtime routine and the child gets enough rest to help prevent night terrors reoccurring. Parents of children who get frequent night terrors are advised to wake up their children before the time they experience them. Waking up the child is thought to alter the child sleeping cycle and prevent night terrors from occurring, this is also thought to help children who sleepwalk (Iannelli). <https://assignbuster.com/night-terrors/>

Sleep medications are rarely used especially if the child gets frequent night terrors. Medications such as tricyclic antidepressants are rarely indicated because they do not offer long-term help but temporal treatment.

Tricyclic antidepressants are used for severe cases especially if the child's waking behavior is seriously affected (WebMed). It is vital that parents contact medical help especially if the night terrors occur very often, disrupts sleep on a regular basis or causes injuries (emedicinehealth). Counseling may be appropriate to treating night terrors in some cases. Prevention There are several steps on how parents should try to reduce night terrors. Parents should try to interrupt their children if they have numerous episodes of night terrors. Parents should note how often the child has night terrors, and then wake the child some 15 minutes before the expected night terror can occur and keep the child awake for about 5 minutes.

Continuing the routine for a week will disrupt his/her night terror routine (WebMed). Scheduling plenty of time for calming bedtime rituals like a bath, cuddling the child or singing to the child may help the situation (BabyCenter). Outlook of Night Terrors Night terrors episodes are usually short-lived and can occur for several weeks. Usually children outgrow night terrors by the time they reach adolescence and the children will rarely have problem of staying asleep (emedicinehealth). It is important that parents do not try to wake their or soothe their child during a night terror, shaking or startling the child may lead to more frantic behavior.

Conclusion The paper has discussed about night terrors condition that usually affects small children peaking at 3? years although it is known to

affect adults too. The condition is caused by fever, sleep deprivation or stressful life events during the day. Parents with the children suffering from the condition should understand that there is no medication for a long-term cure of night terrors. They should be supportive of their children and never should they try to wake them during night terror episodes. They should however try to alter a child's schedule like waking them some few minutes before the terror can occur as this is known to alter the sleep cycle. The condition usually disappears when children reach adolescent age.