

Sept. 11, 2001

KAMLOOPS - Dr. Ron Cridland, a family physician with more than 10 years experience in treating a realm of sleep disorders, joins the University College of the Cariboo's Sleep Disorder Clinic in Kamloops on a regular basis.

As of this term, he will be available to see patients for up to four days every two weeks. Cridland is a resident of Kelowna, but currently shares time practicing in Kamloops and Calgary. He came on board at UCC in May of 2001 and was seeing patients periodically, but had no regular schedule. The change means more clients will have access to his expertise in treating their sleep problems.

The Sleep Disorder Clinic is operated through the Respiratory Therapy program, part of the Health Sciences Department at UCC. The Kamloops campus is the only place in the province that offers the Respiratory Therapy program and the clinic provides a practical setting for students to learn. They, under the supervision of their instructors, book appointments, do pre-assessments and provide the diagnostic technology used in the office.

The clinic is also unique to the Interior in that it treats a wide range of sleep-related disorders. Patients throughout the area are referred by their family physicians. Cridland then consults, diagnoses problems and sets up treatment using a variety of interventions.

Cridland has written the American Board of Sleep Medicine Exams and has practiced sleep medicine in California as well as Western Canada. He is an advocate for making sleep disorders a higher priority on medical school curriculums. Cridland says within family medicine, more than 60 per cent of the people who are seen, suffer from some sort of sleep disorder.

In addition to his work in Kamloops and Calgary, he is also considering setting up a sleep disorder clinic in his hometown of Kelowna.

Other sleep disorder clinics in the province include ones at UBC and UVIC, but UCC's is unique in that it's linked into respiratory therapy and covers a full range of sleep-related problems. There are also medical specialists in B.C. who operate sleep disorder clinics, but they tend to focus on specific areas such as neurology and cardiology, says Cridland.

For more information on the UCC Sleep Disorder Clinic, please contact Dr. Ron Cridland at 250-868-6164 (cell), or Les Matthews, Sleep Program coordinator at 250-828-5434.

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Can disturbed sleep affect your health?

Les Matthews Registered Respiratory Therapist
UCC Sleep Disorders Clinic

Sleep occupies as much as one third of our lives.

Although science has been fascinated with sleep for centuries, our understanding of it has remained largely ambiguous. Nevertheless, in the last part of the twentieth century - with the aid of funding and technology - knowledge surrounding sleep has exploded. While a sufficient amount of mystery still surrounds the subject, scientists and researchers have come a long way in understanding this basic necessity. To date, more than 80 sleep disorders have been identified.

One of the most important questions researchers can ask when examining sleep disorders is, "Will a sleep disturbance affect a person's health?"

According to recent medical research, the answer is clearly yes. In fact, sleep is important to almost every function in our bodies. Without adequate amounts, our bodies are more prone to infection and have a reduced ability to deal with stress. Likelihood of developing illness and disease, also go up. At the very least, numerous medical conditions are aggravated by inadequate or abnormal sleep.

A recent study conducted in Toronto, Ont., (WHAT HOSPITAL There isn't a bio in the article it just says Toronto sleep clinic It is however published in a reputable journal and has been cited commonly in the literature.) consisting of 2,677 people aged 20 to 85 concluded: "Sleep apnea syndrome is profoundly associated with high blood pressure, independent of all relevant risk factors." Sleep apnea is a condition in which sufferers stop breathing while they sleep.

The study's findings have been confirmed through similar research conducted in other parts of the world. This relatively new information identifies sleep apnea, which affects up to four per cent of the population, as being directly responsible for what some refer to as the silent killer (high blood pressure) (IS THE SILENT KILLER STROKE no it's high blood pressure?).

A number of recently completed studies have also associated sleep disorders with an increase in the number of motor vehicle accidents. Studies have shown significant increases in the rate of automobile accidents. A study published in the American Journal of Respiratory and Critical Care Medicine last year reported a 7 fold increase in accident rates for people with untreated obstructive sleep apnea The transportation industry is beginning to look very seriously at the sleep patterns of their employees.

Untreated obstructive sleep apnea (often associated with snoring) has been shown to increase the risk of stroke especially in people younger than 65 years. Many physicians are now investigating sleep as part of their follow-up after a stroke has occurred.

Increased daytime sleepiness has been shown to increase the risk of heart attack in people over the age of 80 years.

There also appears to be increasing evidence that sleep disturbances are directly related to depression and certain other psychiatric disorders.

As we continue to uncover the mysteries of sleep, it becomes increasingly apparent that the study and treatment of sleeping disorders are important. Effectively treating sleep disorders will have a significant impact on the health of our society. If you or someone you know has a sleeping disorder it is important to seek medical help as soon as possible.

Many sleeping disorders are easily diagnosed and treated, making a big difference in quality and longevity of life. For more information contact UCC's Sleep Disorders Clinic. Our clinic Doctor, Dr Ron Cridland has more than 10 years experience in treating the entire realm of sleep disorders and provides a valuable resource for our students and the community.

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Sleep Habits

L.R Matthews RRT (A) MA
UCC Sleep Program Coordinator

Individual needs for sleep vary from four to 10 hours per night and there doesn't appear to be an ideal sleeping pattern that will work the same for everyone.

How much sleep you need may simply be answered by saying, "enough is enough."

If you feel rested upon waking and alert during the day, your needs are being met. If you are unhappy with the quality or quantity of your sleep, it is important for you to seek medical consultation.

As researchers continue to uncover the mysteries of sleep, a number of fundamental principles are beginning to emerge. Researchers recommend the following:

1. Don't stay in bed any longer than needed for sleeping.
2. Don't allow your bed to become a place where you fight to sleep.
3. If you can't sleep get up and engage in a relaxing activity
4. Once you become drowsy return to bed for sleeping
5. Don't clock watch, if you set an alarm set it and then remove it from view.
6. Exercise is best performed at least 6 hours before bedtime.
7. Generally speaking, napping steals from your nighttime sleeping quality so, if possible, try to avoid napping. Individual differences may allow for napping as long as it doesn't interfere with sleep during the night.
8. Heavy smokers experience a reduction in sleep quality when compared to their non-smoking counterparts. Another good reason to quit.
9. Alcohol should not be used to promote sleep onset. Although it may help you fall asleep it will result in more frequent awakenings throughout the night.
10. Avoid caffeinated beverages or food in the later part of the day.
11. Relaxation techniques can be very helpful in improving the quality and quantity of your sleep.
12. Avoid the use of over the counter sleep medication. Although medications can be an effective treatment for sleep disorders they should only be used under the supervision of your doctor. The least amount of drug to attain the desired effect for the shortest period of time is the rule. Side effects are a common problem with drugs designed to help you sleep. In some cases the very medications designed to help you sleep actually disturb both your sleep quantity and quality.

Sleep is no longer considered a passive process. Your mind and body are actively carrying out important physiological and psychological functions. If this part of your life is not functioning adequately, seek medical consultation. Don't give up until you get positive results because your health may depend it.

Les Matthews, RRT (A) MA, is the sleep program coordinator and an instructor in the Respiratory Therapy Program at the University College of the Cariboo. He can be reached at 250-828-5434 or matthews@carboo.bc.ca.