

News and Views

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NEWS

Role of Sleep in Women with Gestational Hypertension

Sleep disturbances occur very often during pregnancy. These disturbances are due to physiologic, hormonal and physical changes associated with pregnancy.^[1] Sleep disturbances in pregnancy may be a risk factor for hypertension, which can lead to maternal and fetal complications.^[2]

Javaheri, *et al.* found that poor quality of sleep, defined as sleep efficiency $\leq 85\%$ or short duration of sleep (≤ 6.5 h), was associated with elevated blood pressure in adolescents.^[3] Similar to non-pregnant women, sleep disturbances can lead to increased blood pressure in pregnant women. Suzuki, *et al.* found that among 192 pregnant women, 88% of them had sleep disturbances compared with their usual experience. The changes that reported are insomnia, parasomnias, restless leg syndrome, snoring and sleep apnea. The most frequent self-reported causes of sleep disturbance during pregnancy were urinary frequency, back or hip ache and heartburn.^[4] Okun and Coussons-Read reported that pregnant women had an increased number of naps, awakenings during night time and poor sleep quality than non-pregnant women.^[5] Hypertensive disorders in pregnancy could cause maternal morbidity later in life and it predisposes to cardiovascular disease in future.^[6]

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VIEWS

Suggestions for Improving Sleep Disturbances in Pregnancy

Sleep disturbances are common during pregnancy, which is due to nausea, large baby bump, frequent urination because of growing belly and hormonal changes. Inadequate sleep for long time could lead to high blood pressure, obesity and other serious health problems that can complicate pregnancy and delivery and it can also lead to some other complications later in life.

There are few tips for improving the sleep in pregnancy, which includes lying on the side supporting with a pillow on the bump and between the knees. Avoid caffeinated drinks such as tea, coffee and energy drinks. Consuming nutritious food which is rich in protein. Protein rich foods are good for mother and the baby as well. Do not stress about sleeplessness when lying in the bed, worrying about it can make this even worse. Naps can be taken in the day time. Avoid use of mobile phones, television and computers before going to bed. Do some routines like warm bath or reading few pages of book before bedtime. Stay active in the day time by doing yoga, swimming and walking. Do some relaxation exercises and deep breathing exercise like pranayama before going to bed. This will help in reducing the complications and enhances the pregnancy outcomes.