Media Write up

The slogan this year announced by World Sleep Society is **“Healthy sleep, Healthy Aging”** and declared March’15 as a **World Sleep Day**, raising the importance of sleep hygiene, which emphasize on enhancing the overall quality of life, with good sleep. Adults are well versed with a fact of having healthy diet and adequate exercise. However, sleep is not given importance that is needed. The parents of children and adults generally believe that there is hardly any effort required to fall asleep after a hectic day. Nowadays people are exposed to various digital screens in the bedrooms in the form of mobiles, iPads and laptops. Nevertheless the digital screens has caused various irregularities in normal sleep cycle and the person doesn’t go into deep sleep which is very important for rejunuventionand restoration of the metabolism in our body and this is deprived if the person is having any sleep disordered breathing.

The person is suffering from obstruction in upper airway due to any physical/physiological factor causing cessation of breathing (apnea) during sleep; commonly labeled as Obstructive Sleep Apnea(OSA), resulting in abnormalities in sleep pattern and patient doesn’t go into deep sleep. This can also result in coking sensation during night and many times repeated arousals. The sequence goes on and there may be decrease sleepiness, fatigue, leg cramps etc. These patients are also prone to have accidents, says Dr. Sanjay Khanna, Head of ENT department at Paras Hospital. This can be cured if the upper airway obstruction is corrected surgically. He further added that in a study done by Philips Healthcare India, majority of Indians are sleep deprived (93%) and out of those 50% feels that their work suffers due to lack of normal sleep hours. The study further adds that more than 70% of Indians wake up 1-3 times per night which indicates poor quality of sleep and they are unaware about the ill effects of the same.

Another important factor is learning and memory for which sleep is essential. There are so many researches which proves the direct cause and effect relationship between sleep apnea and various systemic illness like diabetes, hypertension, heart disease, stroke and other cognitive functions of brain” says Dr. Sachin Gupta, a neurologist.

Dr. S.K. Gupta, a pulmonologist at Paras Hospital also stressed upon the impact of various chest problems and lower respiratory disease including COPD, and respiratory distress syndrome causing difficulty in breathing and apneic spells at night.

Nevertheless like adults and children do suffer from obstructive sleep apnea and it affects about 10% of children. The symptoms in children include restless sleep, sweating during sleep, snoring, night terror, bed wetting, hyperactive behaviour and poor school performance, says Dr. Sanjay Khanna. He added that the cause of OSA in children is usually nasal obstruction due to enlarged turbinate, adenoid and tonsillar hypertrophy.

It’s worth mentioning here that most sleep disorders are preventable and treatable, yet less than one-third of seek professional help. Worldwide sleep disorders contribute a global epidemic that threatens health and quality of life for upto 45% of world’s population. The important elements of good quality sleep are duration, continuity and depth of sleep.