



## Recognizing the Complexities of Somnambulate

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### Description

Somnambulate, commonly known as sleepwalking, is a fascinating and complex sleep disorder that affects a significant number of individuals worldwide. It involves engaging in complex behaviors while in a state of partial wakefulness during the sleep cycle. Simple actions like getting out of bed or more complex ones like walking, talking or even leaving the house, can all be part of sleepwalking.

Somnambulate is classified as a parasomnia, a group of sleep disorders that involve abnormal behaviors, emotions or experiences during sleep. It usually occurs during the deep sleep stage and can last for a few seconds to several minutes. Sleepwalkers are often unresponsive and have no memory of their actions upon awakening.

### Causes of somnambulate

The exact causes of somnambulate are not fully understood, but several factors contribute to its occurrence. These factors include:

**Genetic predisposition:** There is evidence to suggest that a family history of sleepwalking increases the likelihood of experiencing somnambulate. Certain genetic variations may contribute to the disorder.

**Sleep deprivation:** Lack of sufficient sleep or poor sleep quality can trigger somnambulate in susceptible individuals. Sleep disturbances, such as sleep apnea or restless leg syndrome, can also be contributing factors.

**Medications and substances:** Certain medications, such as sedatives, hypnotics and some antidepressants, can increase the risk of somnambulate. Alcohol and drug use, particularly sleep aids or tranquilizers, may also trigger these sleepwalk incidents.

**Other medical conditions:** Somnambulate can be associated with

other medical conditions, including fever, sleep disorders like insomnia or narcolepsy and psychiatric disorders such as anxiety or Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD).

Somnambulate is more common in children, with prevalence rates ranging from 10% to 30% during childhood. However, it can persist into adulthood, affecting approximately 2% to 4% of the adult population. Sleepwalking incidents can occur sporadically or frequently, impacting the quality of sleep and overall well-being of individuals and their families. It can lead to injuries, sleep disruption, daytime fatigue and emotional distress.

Diagnosing somnambulate typically involves a thorough evaluation of the individual's medical history, sleep patterns, and the presence of other sleep disorders or underlying conditions. In some cases, a sleep study called polysomnography may be conducted to monitor brain waves, heart rate, and muscle activity during sleep.

### Treatment for somnambulate

Treatment options for somnambulate focus on minimizing the frequency and severity of incidents. These may include:

**Establishing a secure sleep environment:** Eliminating the potential hazards at the sleeping space, such as sharp objects or obstacles, may reduce the chance of injuries during sleepwalk incidents.

**Improving sleep hygiene:** Practicing good sleep habits, such as maintaining a regular sleep schedule, ensuring a comfortable sleep environment and minimizing stimulants like caffeine and electronic devices before bed, can promote better sleep quality and reduce the occurrence of sleepwalking.

**Addressing underlying conditions:** Treating any underlying medical or psychiatric conditions that contribute to somnambulate, such as sleep apnea or anxiety disorders, can help alleviate symptoms.

**Medications:** In some cases, medications may be prescribed to reduce the frequency and intensity of sleepwalking incidents. These may include benzodiazepines or antidepressants.

### Conclusion

Somnambulate is a complex sleep disorder that can have a significant impact on individuals' quality of life and well-being. Understanding the complexities of this condition, including its causes, symptoms and potential treatments, is important for effective management. If a person experiences somnambulate, it is essential to consult with a healthcare professional for proper diagnosis and guidance. By implementing appropriate measures and seeking treatment when necessary, individuals with somnambulate can enhance their sleep quality and reduce the disruptive effects of this intriguing sleep disorder.

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