Collaboration in Research Involving Traumatic Brain Injury and Sleep Disorders


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In our recent paper published here, we reported on the prevalence and consequences of sleep disorders after traumatic brain injury (TBI) based on data collected in a multicenter project. In this study, we found a high prevalence of sleep disorders (obstructive sleep apnea [OSA], narcolepsy and post-traumatic hypersomnia [PTH]) in an unselected sample of TBI patients who underwent nocturnal polysomnography. We also found that TBI patients with a sleep disorder or excessive daytime sleepiness (EDS) as determined by objective measurement through the multiple sleep latency test (MSLT), had more difficulties with sustained attention. In a follow-up paper we documented that those patients with TBI and OSA have more impairment in sustained attention and memory than TBI patients without OSA.

While these findings are intriguing in that they point to the potential impact of sleep disorders on TBI outcome and general quality of life, much more work is necessary to elucidate these relations and find effective treatments. As in all emerging areas, careful study will require much effort and many resources. These can best be brought to bear through collaborative efforts across multiple centers. Thus, we enthusiastically concur with Agrawal et al. and hope that our investigations and those of others might spur on such collaborative efforts to elucidate the causes, foster early diagnosis, and develop optimal treatment for these problems. Perhaps an international conference bringing together diverse investigators involved in these fields might be helpful in promoting this goal.

REFERENCES

