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Oral Presentation

Sleep Disorders and Traffic Accidents

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Abstract

One of the leading causes of death and disability in the Middle East is road traffic accidents. There are multiple factors that cause these traffic accidents, and the most important of which is fatigue, drowsiness and lack of concentration. The risk of road traffic accidents due to sleepiness, which were reported by police, increased by more than sevenfold in low alertness hours during circadian rhythm (0–6 A.M.) compared to other times during the day. The risk of road traffic accidents due to fatigue and sleepiness decreased in hours with maximum of alertness (6-10 P.M.) of circadian rhythm compared to other times during the day. Public health officials, road traffic designers and the police should co-operate in an interdisciplinary method to implement the proven effective measures to lower this increasingly heavy social and economic burden. Sleep and fatigue-related vehicle accidents are not only more common than is generally realized, but are more likely to result in death and serious injury owing to the relatively high speed of the vehicles on impact. To examine and address this public health issue, a screening program for drowsiness in commercial drivers is under development. Driver's sleepiness due to sleep disorders are an important preventable cause of morbidity and mortality. Screening of commercial drivers is a topic of growing interest in occupational sleep medicine.

Keywords: Sleep Disorders, Fatigue, Traffic Accidents.

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