Kleine-Levin Syndrome

Kleine-Levin syndrome is a rare disorder that causes recurring periods of excessive drowsiness and sleep (up to 20 hours per day).

SYMPTOMS

Symptoms, which may last for days to weeks, also include:

- Eating too much.
- Irritability.
- Disorientation.
- Lack of energy.
- Being very sensitive to noise.

Some patients may also experience:

- Hallucinations and an abnormally high sex drive.

Affected persons are normal between episodes. Although depression and loss of memory (*amnesia*) may be noted temporarily after an attack. It may be weeks or more before symptoms reappear. Onset is typically around adolescence to the late teens. The disorder is 4 times more common in males than in females. Symptoms may be related to malfunction of the hypothalamus. This is the part of the brain that governs appetite and sleep.

TREATMENT

There is no exact treatment for Kleine-Levin syndrome. Stimulants are used to treat sleepiness. These include:

- Amphetamines.
- Methylphenidate.
- Modafinil.

Because of similarities between Kleine-Levin syndrome and certain mood disorders, lithium and carbamazepine may be prescribed. Responses to treatment have often been limited. This disorder needs to be should not be mistaken for the cyclic re-occurrence of sleepiness during the premenstrual period in teenaged girls. This sleepiness may be controlled with birth control pills.

WHAT WILL HAPPEN

The disorder appears to be non cancerous (*benign*). It does not impact on intellect or physical function. Symptoms usually improve or disappear with age.

RESEARCH BEING DONE

NINDS supports a broad range of clinical and basic research on diseases causing sleep disorders, in an effort to clarify the mechanisms of these conditions and to develop better treatments for them.

Research is continually being done to learn more about this problem.

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