

Insomnia May Increase Your Risk Of Stroke

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[Brett Smith](#) for redOrbit.com – Your Universe Online

If you're having trouble sleeping at night, here's one more thing to keep you awake – [insomnia](#) can lead to an increased risk of [stroke](#).

According to a new [report](#) in *Stroke*, a journal of the American Heart Association, Taiwan-based research revealed that insomnia raised the chance of hospitalization due to stroke by 54 percent over the course of four years.

The study also said the frequency of stroke was eight times greater for those identified as having insomnia between 18-34 years old. After age 35, the risk of stroke steadily dropped. Those insomniacs diagnosed with [diabetes](#) showed an even greater risk for stroke.

“We feel strongly that individuals with chronic insomnia, particularly younger persons, see their physician to have stroke risk factors assessed and, when indicated, treated appropriately,” said study author [Ya-Wen Hsu](#), an assistant professor of pharmacy at Chia Nan University in Taiwan. “Our findings also highlight the clinical importance of screening for insomnia at younger ages. Treating insomnia is also very important, whether by medication or cognitive therapy.”

To reach their conclusion, the researchers split volunteers – all of whom had never been diagnosed with a stroke or sleep apnea – into groups identified via a distinct kind of insomnia. The team considered insomnia to include trouble starting or sustaining sleep; chronic or lingering insomnia lasted one to six months; relapse insomnia was a return of insomnia after being recognized as free of the condition for over six months at any evaluation point during the four-year study and remission was a shift in diagnosis from insomnia to non-insomnia at the following evaluation point.

Over the course of four years, nearly 590 insomniacs and over 960 non-insomniacs were admitted for stroke the researchers found. Chronic insomniacs showed a higher three-year growing incidence of stroke compared to the other volunteers in the remission category.

While the researchers did not identify a cause-and-effect relationship, they noted that insomnia may adjust cardiovascular wellbeing via inflammation, promoting glucose intolerance, boosting blood pressure or increasing hyperactivity. The team added that behavioral factors, such as physical activity or diet, and psychological factors might play a role in the relationship between insomnia and stroke.

The Taiwanese researchers also said it was unclear if the findings are culture-based, but said other studies in other countries have also indicated a similar relationship.

“Individuals should not simply accept insomnia as a benign, although difficult, condition that carries no major health risks,” Hsu said. “They should seek medical evaluation of other possible risk factors that might

contribute to stroke.”

A study on stroke published earlier this week revealed that [shingles](#) is also linked to increased risk for stroke. The study also found the antiviral drugs appeared to offer some protection.

The researchers found a higher stroke risk in the first 6 months after shingles symptoms appeared. Increased risk was particularly notable in patients with a rash near their eyes, the study found.

Shingles, or herpes zoster, develops when the virus that causes chickenpox in children remains dormant in the body and reactivates later in life, causing a painful and contagious rash. The condition affects an estimated 1 million adults in the US.