**Insomnia:**

Insomnia is defined as a difficulty in falling asleep and/or staying asleep resulting in poorer quality or less sleep. It has repercussions in the daytime and, if chronic, can foster dysfunctional thoughts.

**Nightmare:**

Nightmares are dreams that are associated with fear and anxiety; they can correlate with insomnia.

### Insomnia & Nightmare as a Risk Factor for Suicide:

- Fawcett and colleagues (1990) first recognized insomnia as an acute risk factor for suicide, i.e. associated with suicide in the next 12 months.
- As noted above, sleep problems are associated with both depressive and anxiety disorders, both of which are risk factors for suicide (Wong & Brower, 2012).
- A review found 25 studies linking insomnia and sleep difficulties to an increase in suicidal ideation, suicidal behavior, and death by suicide (McCall, 2011).
- Insomnia is predictive of suicidal thoughts and behaviors, even when depression, drug-use, alcohol-related problems, PTSD, hopelessness and symptoms of anxiety have been controlled (Ribeiro et al., 2012; Wong & Brower, 2012; Bjørngaard et al., 2011).
- There is an almost 5-fold increase in risk for suicide when sleep problems occur “almost every night.” (Bjørngaard et al., 2011)
- Thirteen percent of a sleep clinic’s patients report suicidal ideation (Krakow et al., 2011).
- The association between sleep problems and death by suicide has been found to be stronger among younger versus older people (Bjørngaard et al., 2011); but they still increase risk of suicide among the elderly. (Bernert, 2007; Nadorff et al., 2013).
- Frequent nightmares are associated with a nearly four-fold increase in risk of suicide attempts among men and a nearly doubling of risk among women. (Susánszky et al., 2011)
- Overarousal, marked by agitation and sleep disturbances, is often experienced by suicide victims immediately prior to death (Ribeiro et al., 2012; Rebeiro et al., 2013).
References:


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