



Evidence suggests that sleep is a common problem for people with a wide range of neurological conditions

- UCB supports World Sleep Day (19th March 2010)
- Sleep specialists and patients encourage more help for sleep problems linked to neurological diseases
- New research links narcolepsy to overactive immune system

Brussels (Belgium), 19 March 2010 – 7:00 AM (CET) Patients with neurological diseases need more help with their associated sleep-wake disturbances that can often make their underlying illness worse, say leading sleep specialists attending a sleep meeting hosted by biopharmaceutical company, UCB, to mark World Sleep Day.

A growing body of evidence to be discussed at the meeting shows that:

- Disturbed sleep is a common problem for people with Parkinson's disease¹
- One in three people with Parkinson's disease suffer from excessive daytime sleepiness²
- Over 80% of people with Restless Legs Syndrome (RLS) have sudden uncontrolled limb movements while they are asleep³ – leading to disturbed sleep for them and their partners
- 99% of fibromyalgia patients have sleep problems, resulting in worse pain and fatigue and reduced ability to lead a normal life⁴
- People with epilepsy who do not get enough sleep are more likely to have seizures⁵
- Epilepsy patients find it harder to get to sleep and are more likely to wake during the night than those who do not have epilepsy⁵
- Stroke patients often have sleep-wake disturbances, which affect the course and outcome of stroke⁶

"Sleep-wake disturbances can in fact represent the first manifestation of an underlying neurological disorder, for example Parkinson's disease, but can also influence the course and outcome of a known neurological disorder, for example epilepsy and stroke," explains meeting chairman, Professor Claudio Bassetti, President of the European Sleep Research Society (ESRS) and Scientific Director of the European Neurological Society (ENS). "As



clinicians and researchers, we must address all aspects of our patients' illness, including their related sleep-wake problems."

New published research suggests that narcolepsy is an autoimmune disease

New research to be discussed at the meeting suggests that the excessive daytime sleepiness disorder, narcolepsy, is an autoimmune disease.

Recently published research shows that people with narcolepsy have elevated levels of an immune factor called Trib2-specific antibody⁷. This antibody attacks important cells in the brain that produce hypocretins – hormonal peptides that regulate sleep and wakefulness⁷.

"This is the first research to show that Trib2-specific antibodies target hypocretin neurones and it suggests that narcolepsy is an autoimmune disease. We also have preliminary data to suggest that people with early narcolepsy and high levels of Trib2-specific antibodies may benefit from immunotherapy to block the autoimmune process," explains one of the researchers, Professor Mehdi Tafti, from the Center for Investigation and Research in Sleep at the Centre Hospitalo-universitaire Vaudois, Lausanne, Switzerland.

Patients highlight the impact of poor sleep on their underlying neurological disease

Patients who are speaking at the meeting stress the impact of poor sleep on their underlying neurological disease.

"Before I developed Parkinson's disease, I enjoyed seven or eight hours sleep every night, but now I rarely get more than five hours and, on a bad night, I wake up every hour or so. As a result, I am tired all day, and fall asleep at the drop of a hat. People think it's funny, but it makes it hard for me to be independent, which is just about the most important thing for someone with a chronic illness like mine," says Sheila from the UK.

"I had seizures in my sleep, which not only woke me up but left me tired and forgetful during the day. When I became menopausal, I developed severe insomnia, which made my seizures worse. Fortunately, I have now found medication that has decreased my seizures and enabled me to sleep better, so I can concentrate during the day and start to live my dreams again," explains Monica from the Netherlands.

"I've had restless legs syndrome nearly all my life and, as a result, I've had a lot of sleepless nights. Not being able to sleep makes the pains in my legs and feet and other



RLS symptoms worse during the following 24 hours and I can find it hard to concentrate at work. Only when I spent a night in a sleep laboratory could my doctors see just how badly I was sleeping, and with their help I began to find ways to improve my symptoms," says Sten from Sweden.

About World Sleep Day⁸

World Sleep Day is an international annual event, intended to be a celebration of sleep and a call to action on important issues related to sleep, including medicine, education, social aspects and driving. It aims to lessen the burden of sleep problems on society through better prevention and management of sleep disorders. World Sleep Day 2010 is being held on March 19th, under the slogan "Sleep Well, Stay Healthy".

This marks the third World Sleep Day event organized by the World Association of Sleep Medicine (WASM).

As a committed sponsor of World Sleep Day, UCB is supporting the WASM in its aims to lessen the burden of sleep problems on society through better prevention and management of these disorders.

About the 1st European Narcolepsy Day

Europe's first Narcolepsy Day was held on March 18th 2010 as an initiative of the European Narcolepsy Network and under the patronage of the European Sleep Research Society.

About Restless Legs Syndrome, narcolepsy, Parkinson's disease and epilepsy⁹

Restless Legs Syndrome (RLS) is a neurological disorder characterized by unpleasant sensations in the legs and an uncontrollable urge to move when at rest in an effort to relieve these feelings. RLS sensations are often described by people as burning, creeping, tugging, or like insects crawling inside the legs.

Narcolepsy is a chronic neurological disorder caused by the brain's inability to regulate sleep-wake cycles normally. At various times throughout the day, people with narcolepsy experience irresistible bouts of sleep. If the urge becomes overwhelming, individuals will fall asleep for periods lasting from a few seconds to several minutes.

Parkinson's disease is a neurodegenerative disorder resulting in the loss of dopamine-producing brain cells. The four primary symptoms of PD are tremor, or trembling in hands, arms, legs, jaw, and face; rigidity, or stiffness of the limbs and trunk; bradykinesia, or slowness of movement; and postural instability, or impaired balance and coordination.



Epilepsy is a chronic neurological disorder in which clusters of nerve cells, or neurons, in the brain sometimes signal abnormally. In epilepsy, the normal pattern of neuronal activity becomes disturbed, causing strange sensations, emotions, and behavior or sometimes convulsions, muscle spasms, and loss of consciousness.

References

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About UCB

UCB, Brussels, Belgium is a biopharmaceutical company dedicated to the research, development and commercialization of innovative medicines with a focus on the fields of central nervous system and immunology disorders. Employing more than 9 000 people in over 40 countries, UCB produced revenue of EUR 3.1 billion in 2009. UCB is listed on Euronext Brussels (symbol: UCB).

Forward looking statement

This press release contains forward-looking statements based on current plans, estimates and beliefs of management. Such statements are subject to risks and uncertainties that may cause actual results to be materially different from those that may be implied by such forward-looking statements contained in this press release. Important factors that could result in such differences include: changes in general economic, business and competitive conditions, effects of future judicial decisions, changes in regulation, exchange rate fluctuations and hiring and retention of its employees.