

Poor Memory Tied to Sleep Woes in Aging Women

Older women with memory problems are more likely to have trouble falling asleep and staying asleep than those without memory loss, a U.S. study finds.

The study included almost 2,500 women, average age 69, with no signs of memory problems at the start of the study. They underwent cognitive tests over a period of 15 years and, at the end of the study, were assessed for sleep problems.

Women who showed signs of mental decline on the tests "were nearly twice as likely to have difficulty staying asleep and one-and-a-half times as likely to have problems falling asleep and being awake for more than 90 minutes during their sleep cycle," study author Dr. Kristine Yaffe, of the University of California, San Francisco, said in a prepared statement.

"Women who declined on one of the tests were also nearly twice as likely to nap more than two hours a day," Yaffe said.

There was no association between cognitive decline and total sleep time, said the study, which is published in the July 17 issue of the journal *Neurology*.

"Perhaps the most likely reason why memory loss may increase the risk of sleep disturbances is that they share a common underlying cause, such as brain changes seen in Alzheimer's disease or other dementias that could increase risk of both memory loss and sleep problems," Yaffe said.

"Another reason could be that women with memory problems may also have anxiety or depression that could affect their sleep. While we attempted to adjust for these measures in our study, it's possible that this effect remains," she said.

Courtesy: <http://www.healthday.com/aboutus/women.htm#1669149>