

Restless Leg Syndrome Case Study

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Part 1: Case Presentation

AF is a 35 year old female who comes to your office with complaints of difficulty falling asleep at night for the last year.

Questions

- What are important components of a good history focused on insomnia?
- What is the differential diagnosis of insomnia?

Case Presentation

- Upon further questioning, AF states:
 - Bedtime is at 11p and generally takes her 30-45 minutes to fall asleep
 - Wake time is 7a weekdays, 8a on weekends
 - When cannot fall asleep, generally stays in bed watching the clock
 - While trying to fall asleep, feels restless and is constantly moving her legs
 - Does not watch TV or read in bed
 - Only drinks juices or herbal tea after dinner
 - Does not smoke or consume alcohol
 - Is generally sleepy when gets into bed at night
 - Does not worry about her sleep during the day
 - Feels fatigued during the day

Questions

- What additional questions should be asked to confirm the diagnosis of restless leg syndrome?
- Are there any questionnaires for RLS?

Case Presentation

- Upon further questioning, AF states that:
 - The restlessness in her legs often feels like something is crawling up them
 - The restlessness generally improves if she moves her legs around
 - She occasionally notices the creepy-crawly feeling when watching TV in her living room if lying on couch
 - Symptoms bother her at least 4 nights per week
 - Had similar symptoms about 5 years ago during her pregnancy
 - Her father and brother have similar symptoms

Part II: Diagnostic Testing

- Given the diagnosis of RLS:
 - Which medications need to be checked for?
 - What diagnostic testing is indicated?

Case Presentation

- Upon further questioning:
 - AF only medication is omeprazole for GERD

- Ferritin level is 80

Questions

- What treatment options are available for RLS and what would you recommend for this patient?
- Is RLS associated with other medical conditions and long term health outcomes?

Part III: Treatment

You prescribe AF pramipexole 0.25 mg one hour before bedtime.

AF returns after 2 months with marked improvement in:

- Symptoms of restlessness: now only bother her about 1x/month
- Sleep latency most nights ~10 minutes

Question

- What is the relationship between RLS and periodic limb movements during wakefulness (Figure 1) and sleep (Figure 2) as observed on a sleep study?

Figure 1: Tracing of PLMs during Sleep



Figure 2: Tracing of PLMs during Wakefulness

