

Health Trends

Americans Are Overtired And Are Taking It Lying Down

(NAPSA)—A nationwide survey found almost half of all Americans (49 percent) are aware of tiredness, but not that it can be a symptom of a serious medical condition.

“We all know what it feels like to be tired,” said Elizabeth A. Battaglini, RN, director of marketing and consumer affairs, National Women’s Health Resource Center (NWHRC) which conducted the survey. “Because the feeling is so common, it is only too easy to dismiss ongoing tiredness as normal and not get help.”

Many people may be suffering from excessive sleepiness, a key symptom and one of the most debilitating features of many sleep disorders. This condition often results in decreased work productivity and social interaction. One-third (33 percent) of those surveyed said fatigue stopped them from being productive. Almost one in three refrained from social or recreational activities.

“Being tired is a very significant problem that most people, even physicians don’t realize and needs to be taken more seriously,” said Lauren Krupp, M.D., neurologist and co-director of the MS Comprehensive Care Center at State University of New York Stony Brook.

Unfortunately, excessive sleepiness and fatigue often go unrecognized by physicians. One reason may be the manner in which patients describe their symptoms. A diagnosis may be missed by physicians who do not realize that



Americans are tired and, for the most part, do little about how they feel, studies show.

excessive sleepiness and fatigue can be described by patients as difficulty concentrating and an overwhelming sense of tiredness and exhaustion.

“Those with ongoing tiredness or fatigue believe there is a certain stigma associated with their condition,” added Joyce Walsleben, Ph.D., director of the Sleep Disorders Center at NYU School of Medicine. “They live with their symptoms out of fear that others will label them as lazy or complainers.”

Despite widespread public discussions about the dangers associated with the over-reliance on coffee and sodas to make it through the day, 45 percent of people surveyed admitted to using caffeine or a similar stimulant solely for maintaining alertness. Surprisingly, nearly half of all respondents were

frequently tired even after getting seven to eight hours of sleep.

“Women today have so many responsibilities that tiredness often seems inevitable,” said Battaglini. “Yet, there is so much that can be done. The first step is awareness—women need to be made aware that tiredness can be a sign of a serious medical condition and they should talk with their doctor.”

As part of this awareness initiative, NWHRC developed information cards to encourage physicians and consumers to discuss these conditions. These cards contain assessment tools to help consumers determine whether their tiredness should be brought to the attention of a physician and to help physicians gauge whether their patients’ tiredness is at a level requiring further evaluation. The survey was made possible by an educational grant from Cephalon, Inc.

The National Women’s Health Resource Center, Inc. (NWHRC) has helped millions of women educate themselves about the health topics that concern them the most. The non-profit organization, dedicated to helping women make informed decisions about their health, encourages women to embrace healthy lifestyles to promote wellness and prevent disease.

For more information, visit www.healthywomen.org or call, toll-free, 877-986-9472.