



Affiliated with
Harvard Medical School

Press Contact

Melinda Pryor
mpryor@schneiderpr.com
617-646-3347

Monday, March 11, 2013

Hebrew SeniorLife Researchers Find Link between Nonbenzodiazepine Hypnotic Drugs and Hip Fractures in Nursing Home Residents

Study Suggests Caution Should be Exercised when Prescribing Sleep Medications

BOSTON —The risk for hip fracture is elevated among nursing home residents using sleep medications, according to a study by researchers at The Institute for Aging Research at [Hebrew SeniorLife](#), an affiliate of Harvard Medical School. Researchers state this is likely due to an increased risk of falling associated with drug use.

The paper, published in the latest issue of *JAMA Internal Medicine*, noted that the association between nonbenzodiazepine hypnotic drugs and hip fractures was somewhat greater among new users, residents with mild to moderate cognitive impairment or those requiring limited assistance with transfers.

The researchers studied data collected from 15,528 long-term nursing home residents, 50-years-old or more, who had experienced a hip fracture. To evaluate the risk of fracture associated with drug use, researchers compared the frequency of drug exposure just prior to the hip fracture with the frequency of more remote drug exposure in the same person.

“It is important to understand the relationship between insomnia, sleep medication use, and injurious falls in nursing home residents,” said Sarah D. Berry, M.D., M.P.H., the study’s lead author. “Based on our findings, sleep medications themselves are likely associated with an increased risk of injurious falls, and caution should be exercised when prescribing these drugs.”

The study explains that insomnia also puts nursing home residents at risk for falls, which often cause hip fractures in the elderly, and researchers suggest improving the sleep environment in these facilities.

“The first treatment for insomnia need not involve drugs,” said Dr. Berry. “Nursing home staff should work to increase daytime activities, avoid napping and manage treatable pain or psychiatric conditions. When drugs are used, clinicians should be aware of the increased risk and screen patients for osteoporosis or consider increased surveillance in an effort to prevent injurious falls.”

The research was funded by the National Institute on Aging. Study co-authors included Yoojin Lee, M.S., M.P.H., ShubingCai, Ph.D. and David D. Dore, PharmD, Ph.D.

About the Institute for Aging Research

Scientists at the Institute for Aging Research seek to transform the human experience of aging by conducting research that will ensure a life of health, dignity and productivity into advanced age. The Institute carries out rigorous studies that discover the mechanisms of age-related

disease and disability; lead to the prevention, treatment and cure of disease; advance the standard of care for older people; and inform public decision-making.

About Hebrew SeniorLife

Hebrew SeniorLife, an affiliate of Harvard Medical School, is a national senior services leader uniquely dedicated to rethinking, researching and redefining the possibilities of aging. Based in Boston, the non-profit, non-sectarian organization has provided communities and health care for seniors, research into aging, and education for geriatric care providers since 1903. For more information about Hebrew SeniorLife, visit www.hebrewseniorlife.org or connect on [Twitter](#), [Facebook](#) or our [blog](#).

#