

Coinciding with the World Sleep Day, ESTEVE offers an [interview](#) to one of the leading insomnia specialists in Spain to provide pharmacists with the main keys to effectively manage insomnia

One third of insomnia sufferers go untreated

It is estimated that 10% of the population suffer from this problem. According to the WHO, 40% have occasional insomnia at some point in their lives

Chronic insomnia can lead to serious health problems, such as type 2 diabetes, cardiovascular problems, or some types of cancer

Specialists insist that insomnia can and must be treated, and pharmacists are a key figure with regard to both diagnosis and treatment

Barcelona, 13 March 2015.- One in three individuals suffers from insomnia, a major health problem if left untreated or treated inappropriately. This condition, however, can and must be treated, and pharmacists are a key figure on account of their proximity. This message is sent by experts, on occasion of the World Sleep Day, and addresses a disorder currently affecting 10% of the population —and another 40% at some point in their lives.

Because these figures are indicative of the high prevalence of insomnia, ESTEVE, a company that has been working on better approaches to this condition for the last 25 years, provides pharmacists with specialized training so that they may offer sound and prompt advice on this disorder. On this occasion, coinciding with the World Sleep Day, ESTEVE [interviews](#) one of the leading experts in Spain: **Dr. Francesc Segarra**, a somnologist at the European Sleep Research Society, the coordinator of the Estivill Sleep Clinic, and the representative of the World Association of Sleep Medicine (WASM) in Spain.

Pharmacy is a key link in the approach to insomnia

On account of their vicinity, pharmacists are key professionals in the diagnosis and treatment of insomnia. *“The pharmacist should be able to make the first assessment, inquire about the causes for lack of sleep, advise on sleep hygiene measures, recommend an OTC therapeutic solution and, if necessary, refer the patient to a specialist”.*

Several OTC options can be effective for occasional insomnia. Phytotherapy, for instance, where plant-based preparations basically reduce stress, that is, work as anxiolytics. Melatonin, which regulates the sleep-wake rhythm, is another option. Finally, antihistamines (such as doxylamine) exert a sedative effect that helps getting to sleep.

“If no improvement is seen after a reasonable time —three to four weeks— then referral to the family doctor or to a specialist should be considered”. According to **Dr. Segarra**, this is important because poor sleep has an impact on our health in the short term, in the form of attention disorders, irritability, memory problems, fatigue, sleepiness... *“something we all have experienced after a sleepless night”.* However, chronic sleep deprivation can result in really important and serious problems, *“such as, for example, type 2 diabetes, cardiovascular conditions or an increased risk of certain types of cancer”.*

Chronic insomnia is sleep deprivation exceeding 6 months. According to the experts, there is no specific patient profile or pattern. This condition can appear at any age and affect anybody, even children. However, *“we do know that being a woman, being unemployed, living alone, a low socioeconomic status, and age, are factors that affect sleep”*.

Stress is also to be considered. *“As compared to other European countries, we Spaniards spend many hours at work and this poses difficulties in reconciling work, private and family life”*. To begin with, we sleep one hour less than our North European neighbors *“because we get up at the same time but go to bed much later”*.

A disorder that can even be prevented

Insomnia not only can and must be treated, it can even be prevented. Coinciding with the World Sleep Day, on March 13th, the World Association of Sleep Medicine has published the [do's and don'ts](#) of good sleep by offering *“simple, easy-to-implement recommendations”*.

1. Maintain a regular wake and sleep pattern.
2. If you are in the habit of taking naps, these should not exceed 45 min
3. Avoid drinking alcohol and smoking 4 hours before going to bed
4. Avoid taking caffeine (coffee, tea, cola drinks, chocolate) 6 hours before going to bed
5. Avoid eating spicy, large or very sweet meals 4 hours before going to bed
6. Exercise regularly, but never just before going to bed
7. Sleep on a comfortable bed
8. Ensure the right temperature in which to sleep, and keep your bedroom well ventilated
9. Keep your bedroom as quiet and dark as possible
10. Use your bedroom only for sleeping. Do not use it for work or leisure

About ESTEVE

ESTEVE (www.esteve.com) is a leading chemical-pharmaceutical group in Spain and has a strong international presence, including subsidiaries and production facilities in several European countries, the US, China and Mexico, and with products marketed in over 90 countries. Research being ESTEVE's hallmark since its foundation in 1929, the company is firmly committed to innovation and excellence and uses its best efforts to promote health and improve people's quality of life.

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