

## Health

### 'Cardiac rehab'

## Strobing stage lights up risk of epileptic seizures

WASHINGTON, June 20, (RTRS): Lashing light effects that have become the norm for electronic dance music concerts could bring on epileptic seizures in young people who may not know they have a vulnerability, Dutch researchers say.

Young people flock to electronic dance music festivals that are popular for their loud music and intense stroboscopic light beams piercing the darkness. But those lights may be putting certain visitors at risk of injuries, hospitalization or other complications related to provoked seizures.

Lights strobing in the frequency range of 15-25 hertz, or cycles per second, are known for their potential to cause seizures, the study team writes in *BMJ Open*. This is especially true for people with photosensitive epilepsy, for whom exposure to flickering or flashing lights and patterns can trigger electrical disturbances in the brain.

After treating a 20-year-old man with no history of epilepsy, who was brought to the emergency department following a seizure at a nighttime dance party, Newel Salet of the VU Medical Center in Amsterdam and his colleagues set out to assess whether such cases happen more often than realized.

They analyzed data for more than 400,000 people who attended 28 electronic dance music concerts in The Netherlands in 2015, 60% of which were indoor or nighttime events.

During these concerts, medical assistance was provided more than 2,700 times. A total of 30 epileptic seizure cases were identified at night-time concerts, while 9 seizure cases occurred during daytime events.

#### Intense

This difference in seizure events could be due to the light effects being far more intense in the dark than in well-lit daytime environments, Salet said.

"We expected somewhat more (seizures at night) than during the day, but not as much, maybe not three and a half times more," he told Reuters Health by email.

Although use of recreational drugs such as ecstasy - which has been associated with increased seizure risk - was also more likely during nighttime events, the proportion of seizure cases in which the drug was used was similar at both daytime and nighttime concerts, the researchers note.

Organizers of EDM festivals should warn visitors of the risk of seizures in situations where strobe lights are expected, as is done for some video games and movies that have intense light effects, said Dr Ignacio Valencia of the Drexel University College of Medicine in Philadelphia. Valencia, who spoke on behalf of the American Epilepsy Society, wasn't involved in the study.

Meanwhile, visitors with a history of photosensitive epilepsy should either avoid these events, or inform those accompanying them of their condition, as these seizures can occur very quickly, Salet said.

The researchers also recommend that visitors get enough sleep, avoid alcohol and recreational drugs, avoid standing too close to the stage and promptly move to a location away from the lights if they begin experiencing symptoms.

However, preventing seizures in patients who are light-sensitive can be tricky.

"If the lighting environment suddenly changes, someone may not have much time to re-position themselves if they are vulnerable," said Dr David Burkholder, a neurologist at the Mayo Clinic in Rochester, Minnesota, who wasn't involved in the study.

"Nothing is completely reliable, but being aware of the potential for a problem, thinking ahead, and having a plan in place to reduce risk is important," he said by email

#### Also:

**LOS ANGELES:** Just one in three patients enrolls in recommended cardiac rehabilitation after having a blocked heart artery cleared and a stent inserted, a Michigan study suggests.

Despite benefits from rehabilitation such as better quality of life and lower rates of re-hospitalization, patients may not attend these sessions because of issues related to insurance, costs and access to a rehab facility, the study authors report in the *Journal of the American College of Cardiology*.

Efforts to get doctors to increase their referrals of patients for cardiac rehab have worked, the authors write, but more needs to be done to make sure patients attend the sessions.

"The use of cardiac rehabilitation after coronary stenting carries the strongest recommendation in our clinical practice guidelines," said lead author Dr Devraj Sukul of the University of Michigan in Ann Arbor.

"Unfortunately, the use of cardiac rehabilitation among eligible patients remains low," he told Reuters Health by email.

Sukul and colleagues analyzed data on more than 42,000 Michigan patients who underwent percutaneous coronary intervention (PCI), a common procedure to clear a blocked heart artery that typically includes placement of a tiny tubular stent to keep the blood vessel open. Using two databases of medical and health insurance records, researchers tracked patients who received care at one of 47 Michigan hospitals between 2012 and 2016, noting who was referred to cardiac rehab, who attended and what factors may have influenced their participation.

The study team found that 30,075 patients were discharged alive to their homes with a referral for cardiac rehab, and 8,000 attended at least one session within 90 days after discharge. People were more likely to attend if they had an 'acute' reason for getting PCI, such as certain types of heart attack. And those who had other health problems, such as diabetes and peripheral artery disease, were less likely than others to attend rehab.



In this June 14, 2019 photo provided by The University of Kansas Health System, 15-year-old Eli Gregg (right), recovers in the hospital bed in Kansas City, Kansas, as his mother Jimmy Russell watches after doctors removed a 10" knife that impaled his face when he fell while playing. The 15-year-old Kansas boy is recovering days after doctors removed the knife that impaled his face. (AP)

### Liver donation for transplant underutilized

## Lack of sleep tied to mental health problems

### Clinical photography up

## Bringing photos to dermatology appointments can help

WASHINGTON, June 20, (RTRS): Poor sleep may be linked to a greater risk for poor mental health on college campuses, new research suggests.

With each night of insufficient sleep, the risk of mental health symptoms increased by roughly 20%, according to findings presented June 11 at Sleep 2019, the annual meeting of the Associated Professional Sleep Societies.

The findings suggest college students might benefit from sleep health education, lead author Thea Ramsey, an undergraduate at the University of Arizona in Tucson, told Reuters Health by email.

Her advisor Dr Michael Grandner, senior author of the study and director of the university's Behavioral Sleep Medicine Clinic, told Reuters Health that while the importance of sleep in mental health has been shown before, "Our study represents one of the largest to date that shows this link, and it shows that the more nights of insufficient sleep you get as a college student, the more likely that you will exhibit a wide range of mental health symptoms."

Ramsey, Grandner and colleagues analyzed data from more than 110,000 students, acquired through the National College Health Assessment. They defined "insufficient sleep" as the number of nights that students did not sleep enough to feel rested.

In their analysis, insufficient sleep was linked to a 19%-29% increase in mental health symptoms. Loneliness increased by 19% for each night of insufficient sleep, depressed mood increased by 21%, anxiety by 25%, desire to self-harm increased by 25%, suicidal thinking increased 28% and exhaustion increased 29%, among other symptoms evaluated.

The researchers examined nearly 8,500 student athletes as a subgroup and found similar associations. Ramsey had suspected there might be differences in athletes' response to insufficient sleep, but the data did not appear to bear that out.

"What I thought was striking was

Nearly all the patients had wheals, or swollen and itchy bumps, and some of them had angioedema, which is swelling beneath the skin. Only about a third of the patients had skin lesions during the appointment, according to the report in the *Journal of Allergy and Clinical Immunology: In Practice*.

Among the 197 patients who brought pictures, 134 didn't have lesions at the time, so the pictures were helpful in confirming a hives diagnosis in 125 cases. Photos also helped doctors rule out hives in 9 cases.

Photographs could be particularly important for skin concerns, not only because lesions may disappear by the time a patient can get an appointment, but also because they could change due to scratching or other treatments, the study authors wrote.

Patients said they took photographs because they worried they wouldn't have any lesions to show once they were able to make the appointment, and about a third said their

flare-up was more severe than usual. Doctors rated the majority of the pictures as "good" and helpful during diagnosis.

"This shows that everyday technology, including smartphones, carry good diagnostic value," Li said. And "there is motivation amongst patients to document their condition to aid diagnosis."

Li recommends taking photographs of any condition that can change over time. A clear, well-lit environment with a neutral background is ideal. Put a ruler next to the lesion to show the size, he suggested.

Most patients don't use special apps for this purpose; instead, most "still capture dermatological information by taking pictures of their skin lesion with their smartphone," said Dr Thomas Hubiche of Centre Hospitalier Intercommunal de Frejus Saint Raphael in Frejus, France. Hubiche, who wasn't involved with this study, has researched patient photographs during dermatology appointments for children.

For the study, members of the Urticaria Group of the French Dermatological Society surveyed 311 patients who had appointments for hives in 2017.

the number of students they were able to study and the strong relationship between insufficient sleep and multiple domains of mental health. This is an important finding as mental health problems are common in this age group, and unfortunately insufficient sleep is also very common in this group," said Dr. Raman Malhotra, an associate professor of neurology at Washington University School of Medicine in St. Louis, Missouri, who was not involved in the research.

"This study would suggest that healthcare providers and universities should put more emphasis on getting adequate amounts of sleep to not only help (with) overall physical health, but (also) mental health," Malhotra told Reuters Health by email.

#### Also:

**LOS ANGELES:** Lack of knowledge among community physicians may be keeping them from raising the possibility of living donor transplants with their patients with liver disease, new survey data suggest.

And misperceptions among the general public about liver disease, liver transplants in general and the people who need them may be keeping some Americans from registering to become organ donors after death,

according to survey results released June 14 by WebMD and the University of Pittsburgh Medical Center at the Living-Donor Liver Transplant Summit at the National Press Club in Washington DC.

Despite advances in transplantation, more than 120,000 people are awaiting new organs, including 14,000 who need livers. About 20% of those on the liver waiting list will die for lack of donor organs, Dr. John Whyte, chief medical officer at WebMD and Dr. Abhinav Humar, chief of the Division of Transplantation at UPMC say in the preface to a report of the findings.

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