

## Why a good night's sleep matters by Dr Peter Venn October 2019



Dr Peter Venn is the Clinical Director at the Sleep Disorder Centre at the Queen Victoria Hospital in East Grinstead.

Dr Venn began by telling us something of the work carried out at The Sleep Disorder Clinic. It is the biggest sleep disorder clinic in the country outside London. The clinic has been running for 25 years. The first referral was in 1993 with just one Consultant and now the clinic sees over 4000 patients with 4 consultants and a large staff. The nearest alternative clinic is at Portsmouth, but more recently there is a clinic run fortnight at Arundel to which referrals from West Sussex are welcomed.

Sleep disorders may be due to a number of different reasons:

- \* insomniacs
- \* breathing difficulties
- \* central disorders, e.g. sleepiness in the day time
- \* 'things that go bump in the night' e.g. sleepwalking
- \* irregular body clock etc

In order to get a good night's sleep, we should have a routine which we follow regularly: a quiet hour before bedtime and sleeping in a light reduced room, preferably without any 'blue lights', i.e. computer screens etc.

Dr Venn gave an example of teenagers who seem incapable of getting up early in the mornings! This appears to be a new age situation. However, today's youngsters now are often on gadgets well into the night which interferes with their natural body clock, subsequently they have difficulty in waking up in the morning. Shift workers can also often be affected by this same adjustment to their time clock. Patients coming to the clinic will be monitored over a number of hours in order to try and diagnose the reason for their sleeplessness.

Dr Venn gave a very interesting and amusing talk. During question time, he suggested that sleep irregularity mostly affects us in latter years and was more prevalent in women. In answer to the question as to the benefit of an after lunch nap, he replied quite positively that indeed it was extremely beneficial to have a half hour or so nap and that once he has retired, he certainly would be taking up the practice.

Dr Venn was thanked for his very informative talk.