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COURT OF APPEALS
DIVISION II

2013 MAR 28 PM 1:11

STATE OF WASHINGTON

BY  DEPUTY

No. 43745-7-II

IN THE COURT OF APPEALS OF THE STATE OF WASHINGTON

DIVISION TWO

STATE OF WASHINGTON,

Respondent,

v.

CHAD ERNEST CHRISTENSEN,

Appellant.

ON APPEAL FROM THE SUPERIOR COURT OF
THE STATE OF WASHINGTON FOR LEWIS COUNTY

PRO-SE SUPPLEMENTAL BRIEF

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

A. SUMMARY OF ARGUMENT..... 1

B. ASSIGNMENTS OF ERROR..... 2

C. ISSUE PERTAINING TO ASSIGNMENTS OF ERROR..... 2

D. STATEMENT OF THE CASE..... 2

E. ARGUMENT

THE APPELLANT'S CONVICTION WAS A
RESULT OF INEFFECTIVENESS OF COUNSEL
IN VIOLATION OF THE WASHINGTON
CONSTITUTION, ARTICLE 1, §22, AND THE
FEDERAL CONSTITUTION, SIXTH AND
FOURTEENTH AMENDMENTS.....12

a. Trial counsel's failure to
investigate and prepare Christensen's defense
was not a reasonable tactical decision.....12

b. Trial counsel's failure to
hire an expert to investigate the appellant's
defense, deprived him of effective assistance.....16

F. CONCLUSION.....18

APPENDIX - 1: "Melatonin: Not a Magic Bullet
For Sleep" [By Dr. Michael J.
Breus].

TABLE OF AUTHORITIES

Washington Supreme Court

Case:	Page:
STATE V. GRIER, 171 Wn. 2d 17, 246 P.3d 1260 (2011).....	13
STATE V. KYLLO, 166 Wn. 2d 856, 215 P.3d 117 (2009).....	13
STATE V. REICHENBACH, 153 Wn. 2d 126, 101 P.3d 80 (2004).....	18

United States Supreme Court

STRICKLAND V. WASHINGTON, 466 U.S. 668, 104 S.Ct. 2052, 80 L.Ed.2d 674 (1984).....	passim
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United States Court of Appeals

HENDERSON V. SARGENT, 926 F.2d 706, 939 F.2d 586 (8th. Cir. 1991), cert. denied, 502 U.S. 1050 (1992).....	14
HARRIS V. WOOD, 64 F.3d 1432 (9th. Cir. 1995).....	17

CONSTITUTIONAL PROVISIONS

ARTICLE 1, §22, Washington State Constitution

Sixth and Fourteenth Amendments to the United -
States Constitution

PRO-SE SUPPLEMENTAL BRIEF - ii

A. SUMMARY OF ARGUMENT

Elan and her two daughters came over to the appellant's residence to stay for the weekend. That friday evening, while the appellant watched T.V., IB walked out of the appellant's bedroom and layed down on his couch and watched T.V. with him. IB had trouble sleeping and her mother Elan gave her melatonin, which is known to cause vivid, enlightening, deep, and crazy dreams. The following morning, when the appellant arrived back from the grocery store, Elan asked the appellant whether IB had touched his genitals, and the bewildered appellant informed Elan that this absolutely did not happen. Six-Eight weeks later, appellant married Elan, and Elan's children moved in with the appellant soon thereafter.

Nearly a year later, the couple's argument unrelated to this incident caused them to separate, and the appellant moved out. Elan decided that it was time to report the alleged incident, and the appellant was charged with one count of first degree child molestation.

Defense counsel failed to investigate and interview IB prior to trial, thereby failing to develop the defense theory of the case that, the pills IB had been taking to help her sleep, had psychoactive potential. Mr. Christensen asks that this Court find that his -

defense counsel was ineffective for his failure to interview IB, investigate the use of melatonin, and hire an expert to testify as to the side-effects of the sleep medicine.

B. ASSIGNMENTS OF ERROR

1. Defense counsel's representation was so deficient that the assistance fell below an objective standard of reasonableness.

2. Defense counsel's deficient performance prejudiced the appellant to the point that there is a reasonable likelihood that the result of the proceedings would have been different.

3. The appellant was prejudiced due to counsel's ineffective representation.

C. ISSUE PERTAINING TO ASSIGNMENTS OF ERROR

Both the State and Federal Constitutions require that a criminal defendant has a right to effective assistance of trial counsel. Where counsel's representation was deficient and caused prejudice, does this render ineffective assistance of counsel?

D. STATEMENT OF THE CASE

Appellate counsel has filed its opening brief² which incorporated by reference as to Mr. Christensen's-

²Appellate counsel mistakenly made an error as to the appellant's charge in its "Issues Pertaining to Assignment of Error." [BRIEF OF APPELLANT, at 1].

ineffective assistance of counsel claim. See BRIEF OF APPELLANT, [at 14].

In September-October of 2010, Elan [Bradley], who had had a romantic relationship with the appellant, stayed with him at his residence with her two daughters, IB and AB. RP 293-300. According to the appellant, the sleeping arrangements were that, the girls were on the couch and he and Elan were to sleep in his bedroom. However, during the turn of events, the appellant's medical condition in regards to his back, whereas, he may only sleep on his side, forced him to change plans -- he moved to the couch and allowed the girls to sleep with their mother. RP 421.

Thereafter, IB came out of the bedroom and layed down on the couch to watch T.V. with the appellant. Not familiar with communicating with adolescents, the appellant asked IB questions regarding the school she attended. Thereafter, IB fell asleep on the couch next to him. RP 426. Specifically, her head was facing him and no touching of private parts occurred. RP 427.

On Saturday morning, while IB was still sleep on the couch, and without waking her up, the appellant went to the grocery store to buy breakfast for his soon-to be family members. Id. When Mr. Christensen returned, Elan asked him whether he had IB touch his genitals, as to which he replied "of course not."

Approximately Six-Eight weeks later, the appellant married ELan. RP 428. Approximately two-weeks after the accusation, Elan and her children moved in with Mr. Christensen. Id. Thereafter, the appellant described a typical marriage with the exception of him having an only child -- Elan had four kids and he had a baby girl. RP 429.

At one point in their marriage, appellant observed that Elan was a cigarette smoker, and alcoholic. RP-430. Several conflicts escalated from there, and the upset appellant had taken his wedding ring off and lobbed it. Thereafter, he left the residence. RP 431-32. After cooling off, Mr. Christensen made an attempt to reconcile with Elan by going back to the residence to no avail. Id.

Before ending their relationship, the appellant spoke with the children and explained why he was leaving the family. When commenting to the girls that they were the reasons why the couple were not getting back together, the girls apparently did not correctly interpret Mr. Christensen's statement -- Elan did not hear appellant's conversation with IB and AB. Two-weeks later, Mr. Christensen moved some of his belongings out of the residence. RP 434.

ISABELLA BRADLEY testified that she was at the appellant's house on the couch, when he allegedly had-
PRO-SE SUPPLEMENTAL BRIEF - 4

taken IB's hand and placed it down his pants. RP 21. IB further testified that she was watching a movie when this alleged incident occurred. RP 22.

Upon cross-examination, IB testified that this alleged incident happened before her mother married the appellant. RP 29. IB claimed she was in the second grade, but could not remember what school she was attending at that time.

AARYANNA BRADLEY, IB's 11-year old sister, testified that she supposedly asked IB why she was washing her hands, and IB allegedly stated "Chad made me touch his dick." RP 35. The word "dick" was contrary to IB's testimony of the word "weiner." AB made no allegation against the appellant, and had slept in the appellant's bedroom on the night in question. RP 35. Upon cross, the appellant lived with the Bradley family about 13-months after the alleged incident. RP 38.

ELAN BRADLEY testified that she has four kids. RP 59. Elan and her children lived with the appellant in his residence in Chehalis in October 2010. RP 64.

As to the alleged incident, IB and AB allegedly came to Elan and stated that IB had been on the couch the night before, and that the appellant had her touch is "penis." RP 65. The word "penis" was contrary to AB's "dick" and IB's use of the word "weiner."

However, Elan testified that she wasn't sure as
PRO-SE SUPPLEMENTAL BRIEF - 5

to whether she confronted the appellant in regards to his allegation. RP 66-67. When Elan confronted the appellant with this accusation, Mr. Christensen thought that IB had transposed someone else's acts upon him. RP 67.

Upon cross, Elan testified that she was still married to the appellant, and conceded that she never reported the allegation to law enforcement until appellant moved out of the home. RP 83-84.

As to the reason why Mr. Christensen moved out - Elan testified that appellant caught her smoking a cigarette at Elan's friends' house. RP 88.

CHELSEA CHRISTENSEN, the appellant's sister, testified that she had known Elan for approximately twenty-years. RP 104. In the fall, her brother started dating Elan while he had an ongoing custody battle with his own daughter. RP 104. At one point in time prior to Elan's relationship with the appellant, Elan had once thought that Elan's husband had molested IB, and that IB had made false accusation in the past in regards to accusations of inappropriate touching. RP 106. Chelsea testified that the appellant moved out due to Elan's overconsumption of alcohol. RP 107-08. Elan informed Chelsea that "he should have never left me and my kids!" "He is going to pay." RP 109.

JANICE BRADEN, Elan's sister, testified under oath that, in directing her attention to the fall of 2010, at some point, Elan developed a relationship with the appellant. RP 111. Elan was in the process of getting a divorce from her previous husband at that time; about three-four weeks before her divorce, Elan and the appellant began "hanging out." RP 113. After moving out of the State, and back to Lewis County, Janice testified that she had daily contact with her sister Elan. In regards to the alleged molestation issue, Janice testified that this subject came up before Elan and the appellant met each other.

Without elaboration into the previous accusations against Elan's ex-husband, Janice also testified that after the appellant moved out, Elan claimed that the appellant had touched IB. RP 115. Subsequently, during Elan and the appellant's marriage, Janice had had a conversation with IB in regards to the alleged touching. IB became mad and went outside and Janice followed; while everyone else was inside, Janice asked IB what was wrong and IB stated that she was mad because she wasn't getting enough attention from the appellant, and so she lied to her mother Elan in regards to the allegations against the appellant. RP 116.

Janice also spoke with AB, [IB's sister] in AB's bedroom. AB specifically stated that she wished the-

PRO-SE SUPPLEMENTAL BRIEF - 7

appellant was there, and that IB lied about the allegations against the appellant.

RP 119.

IB was not accustomed to new men coming in and out of her mothers household.

RP 122-23.

Upon cross, Janice testified that her conversation with AB occurred before police were contacted in regards to the allegations against the appellant.

RP 123.

Prior to getting married to the appellant, during Elan's divorce to Mr.Nate Cook she informed family members that she believed Mr.Cook and touched IB.

RP 124.

After getting into an argument with Elan's boyfriend after the appellant, Janice stopped going to Elan's apartment.

RP 125 .

REBEKAH CHRISTENSEN, the appellant's mother, testified that she recalled the allegation IB had made against her son, prior to Elan moving in with the appellant.

RP 130 .

The appellant phoned in his mother and informed her of IB's allegations against him. When Rebekah drove to residence, her first words were "[y]ou have to be kidding." Id. Rebekah also testified that IB has weird dreams and tells a lot of stories- "she lies".

RP 131 .

Elan and appellant's mother and discussions in regard to IB behavioral and emotional problems.

Elan also informed Rebekah about sexual abuse allegations against her husband.

RP 132.

The appellant's mother talked with Elan quite a bit because they would transport the appellant's daughter, Addison.

a. Diagram Of The Couch AREA

On the night in question, IB testified as to how the appellant allegedly placed her hand down his pants. RP(June 14,2012), at 175-76. According to his diagram of the couch presented by the prosecution, IB testified that the appellant didn't put his legs out on the two sides of the recliner, and that there was no extra room if she were to lay down the way IB Described.

RP 192.

In this regard, the appellant would have to lay down before IB could lay down.

RP 197-98.

Further, IB claimed that she was rolled over on her side facing away from the appellant. While laying on her right side, watching T.V., and "pretending to be asleep," IB could not remember if she asked the appellant to rub her arm. Id. In sum, the appellant would have to sit down first before IB. Finally, IB "guessed" as to which hand the appellant had allegedly grabbed and placed down his pants.

RP 203.

After trial court had inquired as to whether

defense counsel had medical testimony to effect of what Melatonin's ² side-effects. RP 326. Defense counsel informed the trial court that it was without medical testimony, and the prosecution properly objected on the grounds that any questions regarding the alleged victim's use of the sleep medicine would be irrelevant to a lay-person.

Without any pre-trial interviews with the State's witnesses, defense counsel interjected by claiming that the alleged victim's mother would be able to testify as to the side-effects IB experiences after taking Melatonin by mouth. Defense counsel was aware of the sleep-wake cycles, disorientation, confusion, vivid dreams and nightmares that IB has experienced while taking Melatonin. Id.

Defense counsel also conceded that IB's mother could not be considered medical personnel, and the trial court considered in sustaining the prosecution's objection absent medical expert testimony. RP 327.

"Expert testimony might be a different story, but if you haven't got expert testimony, I don't see the relevance or materiality pursuing this line of questioning." Id.

In this regard, the trial court properly concluded that it would not allow the defense to question Elan as ~~to~~ Melatonin's side-effects on IB.

² Melatonin [N-acetyl-5-methoxytryptamine]

As an offer of proof, the defense questioned Elan if she had in the past been giving IB Melatonin for sleep issue, and Elan testified in the affirmative. Elan testified that she didn't recognize the side-effects of Melatonin and did not recall if IB had been given some the previous night in question. RP 328.

Consequently, the trial court sustained the prosecution's objection, correctly holding that there was no evidence that the alleged victim was administered Melatonin when she went to bed the night before.

Secondly, IB claimed that she was 'pretending' to be asleep, and thirdly, absent expert testimony as to the side-effects of Melatonin, the trial court concluded that it would not allow a lay person to testify as to any potential side-effects the drug may cause. RP 329.

"... absent medical evidence that that's a common characteristic or trait of that particular medication, because how the medication affects one person doesn't necessarily mean that's how it affects everyone else that takes it or that there's anything common across a broad spectrum of people that take the medication that they respond in the same way, so it's not something that I think a lay person ordinarily would have expertise to testify about, and its irrelevant as to how it affects somebody else, and unless it's being given by a medical expert, who could testify that in general these are some of the side-effects that Melatonin would cause, assuming that it could be shown that the child was administered Melatonin on the night in question, which it hasn't been,
... "

RP 330.

c. Jury Determination

The trial court instructed the jury on the charge and the aggravating factor from the defense. RP 455-56. After closing arguments, the jury returned a verdict of guilty to the charge, as well as a finding of "yes" to the special verdict, which asked whether the defendant used a position of trust or confidence to facilitate the commission of the alleged offense. CP 115-16.

The appellant was sentenced to life in prison with a minimum mandatory time of 132 months to serve before he could be eligible for parole. CP 148-59. The appellant filed a timely notice of appeal, and this direct appeal seasonably followed. CP 163-64.

E. ARGUMENT

THE APPELLANT'S CONVICTION WAS A DIRECT RESULT OF INEFFECTIVENESS OF COUNSEL, IN VIOLATION OF THE WASHINGTON CONSTITUTION, ARTICLE 1, §22, AND THE FEDERAL CONSTITUTION, SIXTH AND FOURTEENTH AMENDMENTS.

a. Trial Counsel's Failure to investigate and prepare appellant's defense was not a reasonable tactical decision. To establish a claim of ineffective assistance of counsel, the defendant must show that defense counsel's representation was so deficient, that it fell below an objective standard of reasonableness,-

and that the deficient representation prejudiced him to the point that there is a reasonable probability that the result of the proceedings would have been different. See Strickland v. Washington, 466 U.S. 668, 687, 104 S.Ct. 2052, 80 L.Ed.2d 674 (1984); State v. Grier, 171 Wn.2d 17, 34, 246 P.3d 1260 (2011), (quoting, State v. Kylo, 166 Wn.2d 856, 862, 215 P.3d 177 (2009)).

In this regard, an appellate court should determine whether, under prevailing professional norms, trial counsel's purported failures fell enough below the standard of performance to be unreasonable. Strickland, 466 U.S. at 690.

As to the second part of the test, an appellate court must find that the defendant was prejudiced because trial counsel's representation was so deficient as to "undermine confidence in the outcome." Strickland, 466 U.S. at 694.

The appellant first contends that his trial counsel failed to interview the State's witnesses as to the sleeping medicine the alleged victim had been taking at the time of the alleged incident. Further, counsel failed to investigate by researching the evidentiary issue.

Generally, defense counsel is not required to investigate and research each evidentiary issue to exhaustion, and is not deficient if he makes strategic-

PRO-SE SUPPLEMENTAL BRIEF - 13

choices to limit investigation based on reasonable professional judgments. Strickland, 466 U.S. supra at 690-91. However, counsel must undertake sufficient investigation to subject the State's case to a meaningful adversarial test. Id. at 696. When counsel does not develop the defense theory of the case because he fails to investigate, the omission cannot be justified as a strategic decision. Cf. Henderson v. Sargent, 926 F.2d 706, 711, 939 F.2d 586 (8th. Cir. 1991), cert. denied, 502 U.S. 1050 (1992).

Rather, this kind of failure is evidence that defense counsel did not prepare for trial. Henderson, 926 F.2d at 711. While reviewing courts presume that trial counsel is effective, that presumption may be overcome if counsel fails to investigate factual or legal defenses or sufficiently investigate the facts to discover defenses.

Here, Christensen argues that counsel failed to investigate the Melatonin pills IB had been taking, as well as their known side-effects. These side-effects could have been pointed out to the jury in closing argument. Coupled with this argument, counsel failed to interview Elan and IB.

This is a highly unusual case, whereas, the mother to whom her daughter apparently made a statement -

and the mother looking into the situation, did not believe her daughter possibly because of past accusations of similar conduct, and went on to marry the accuser a few weeks later. Adding another twist, Elan's testimony reflects that she beleived both her daughter and the appellant -- an impossibility.

The appellant's mother was totally against their marriage and did not attend the wedding. Elan's excuse for their marriage -- in order to help the appellant's custody case, is preposterous. What better way to get even with someone in society -- to report false accusations against them.

The record does not support a contention that defense counsel investigated the alleged victim's use of Melatonin. Counsel did not interview IB or her mother Elan before trial, and was only able to ask general questions about the Melatonin.² At no time during trial did the jury hear about the side-effects of the sleep medicine:

1. Headaches
2. Nausea
3. Next-day grogginess
4. Hormone fluctuations
5. Vivid dreams and nightmares

² Dr. Michael J. Breus, is a Clinical Psychologist, who specializes in sleep disorders, inter alia. Dr.-Breus's investigation reveals that Melatonin is a hormone that regulates a person's sleep and body clock. It is produced by the pineal gland which sends a signal to the sleep center of the brain. APPENDIX - 1

Dr. Breus specifically states that Melatonin should never be used with children younger than 18. Appendix-1, [pp. 2 of 2].

On average, roughly fifty-percent of adults report at least an occasional bad dream while seven-eight percent of the population will unfortunately experience nightmares regularly. A number of factors can contribute to frightening, vivid dreams being more frequent. By far, the most common cause is stress and anxiety over issues in our daily lives. Studies show that if a person can't sleep because of issues like stress, depression or anxiety, Melatonin may not work in those cases because the problem doesn't lie with the body's ability to make its own Melatonin.

Christensen contends that had defense counsel interviewed the State's witnesses as to the use of Melatonin, and investigated the side-effects, counsel would have developed the defense's theory of the case.

In this regard, a complete failure to investigate and prepare a defense to be presented at trial is not a reasonable tactical decision.

b. Trial counsel's failure to hire a medical expert to investigate the appellant's defense, deprived the appellant effective assistance. When counsel

fails to undertake any independent investigation into the reliability of a complaining witness's statements-

it cannot be justified as a strategic decision. Harris v. Wood, 64 F.3d 1432, 1435-36 (9th. Cir. 1995); Henderson, 926 F.2d supra at 711.

Here, the jury could not have known of the possible side-effects associated with the alleged victim's use of Melatonin. In this regard, it is possible that the testimony of a medical expert, knowledgeable of sleep disorders, and the possible side-effects of Melatonin, may have changed the outcome. Without a medical expert's investigation, and testimony thereafter, the defense lacked the potentially persuasive argument to undermine the alleged victim's testimony as to what actually occurred on the night in question.

In sum, if defense counsel had conducted an investigation, and prepared the defense theory of the case, it may have raised questions about the State's theory. In considering these errors in light of all of the State's less than circumstantial evidence, there is a significant probability that counsel's performance was deficient, and that this deficient performance prejudiced Mr. Christensen. Grier, 171 Wn.2d supra at 32-33.

Here, the alleged victim had been taking 6 milligrams of Melatonin per night. The recommended dosage of an adult is 1 milligram per night.


Dr. Breus, one of the foremost experts in the field of pharmacology, stated that children who are given Melatonin, experience "vivid dreams," "nightmares," drowsiness, and tiredness, especially in cases of high-dosage. It is extremely troubling that the jury in the instant case, was totally unaware, not only of the IB's high-dosage of this "magic bullet," but the extent to which the supplements she was given by her mother. This may have had a particular impact on IB at the time she made accusations against the appellant, [and others].

Further, this failure was likely to prejudice Christensen. Counsel was unable to draw conclusions as to the cause of IB's statements she made to her mother on the morning after the alleged incident. Had the jury known of IB's use of the Melatonin, and its known side-effects, it may well have reached a different result. Strickland, 466 U.S. supra at 694; State v. Reichenbach, 153 Wn.2d 126, 130, 101 P.3d 80 (2004).

F. CONCLUSION

For the reasons stated above, Mr. Christensen respectfully request that this Court reverse, and remand for new trial.

RESPECTFULLY SUBMITTED,



/S/CHAD ERNEST CHRISTENSEN
PRO-SE APPELLANT

CERTIFICATE OF SERVICE BY MAIL

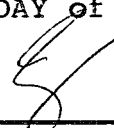
[28 U.S.C. §1746]

Pursuant to GR 3.1, the appellant, Mr. Chad Ernest Christensen, certify under penalty of perjury, under the laws of the State of Washington, that he placed the PRO-SE SUPPLEMENTAL BRIEF, with APPENDIX - 1, in the hands of prison authorities, to deliver by First Class U.S. Mail, under the Washington Court of Appeals No. 43745-7-II, on MARCH 26 2013, to:

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COURT OF APPEALS, DIV. II
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TACOMA, WA., 98402-4454

PROSECUTING ATTORNEY:
JOHNATHEN MYER
345 N.W. NORTH ST.,
CHEHALAS, WA., 98532

I certify that the foregoing is true, correct, and complete, and EXECUTED ON THIS 26th. DAY of MARCH, 2013.


/s/ CHAD ERNEST CHRISTENSEN
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STAFFORD CREEK CORR. CTR.,
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PRO-SE SUPPLEMENTAL BRIEF
COA. #43745-7-II
STATE V. CHRISTENSEN

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HUFFPOST HEALTHY LIVING

Melatonin: Not a Magic Bullet for Sleep

Posted: 02/21/11 08:56 AM ET

Many of you have made a New Year's Resolution to get more and better sleep. I hope you are having great success! But I want to address a topic I am asked about repeatedly, and it may be something many of you have tried or considered in your quest for a better night's sleep: *Is Melatonin good to take to help with my sleep?*

So exactly what is melatonin?

Melatonin is a hormone. It is not an herb, a vitamin or a mineral. Hormones are naturally produced by your body as you need them. This means that it is very unlikely that someone has a melatonin deficiency. While melatonin could be considered natural, in most cases it doesn't come from the earth. There are exceptions -- foods that contain melatonin in them -- but this is a different type of melatonin than what is produced in your brain.

Your melatonin levels can be tested with a blood test, urine test or saliva test. If you are concerned that you may actually be melatonin deficient, ask your doctor about testing. Melatonin is produced by the pineal gland and sends a signal to regulate the sleep-wake cycle in the sleep center of the brain. Interestingly, melatonin is also produced in the retina, the skin and the GI tract, but this is not the melatonin what affects your biological sleep clock.

This is the really important thing you should understand about melatonin: Melatonin is a sleep and body clock regulator, *not* a sleep initiator. Melatonin works with your biological clock by telling your brain when it is time to sleep. Melatonin does not increase your sleep drive or need for sleep.

Melatonin is called the "Vampire Hormone" because it is produced primarily in darkness and inhibited by light. The levels of your melatonin increase in the middle of the night and gradually fall as the night turns to morning, so exposure to light before bed can push your biological clock in the wrong direction, making melatonin ineffective.

Melatonin treats Circadian Rhythm Disorders (where you sleep the right amount of minutes but your body clock is at the wrong time), Shift Work Sleep Disorders and early morning awakenings -- all things that deal with the timing of your need to sleep. Melatonin is not considered an effective treatment for insomnia.

Melatonin in pill form does not function like your body's naturally produced melatonin; it effects the brain in bursts and rapidly leaves the system, instead of the slow build-up and slow wash-out that your body's naturally produced melatonin experiences.

The correct dosage of melatonin can be a problem. According to research conducted at M.I.T., the correct dosage of melatonin for it to be effective is 0.3-1.0 mg. Many commercially available forms of melatonin are in three to 10 times the amount your body would need. In fact, there is some evidence that higher doses may be less effective. In Europe, melatonin at very high doses has been used as a contraceptive.

Melatonin can have side effects. Melatonin (two to three milligrams or higher) has reported side effects of:

- Headaches
- Nausea
- Next-day grogginess
- Hormone fluctuations
- Vivid dreams and nightmares

Melatonin may also have some issues with safety. While melatonin is available over-the-counter, in the U.S. and Canada, melatonin is available only by prescription -- or not at all, in some countries. In the U.S., melatonin is sold as a dietary supplement, not a medication; so until recently, melatonin has not been subject to the same purity rules and standards as prescription medications. In June 2010, new F.D.A. rules went into effect that require all dietary supplements to comply with "good manufacturing practices," which include compliance in manufacturing standards and labeling.

PRO-SE SUPPLEMENTAL BRIEF

APPENDIX - 1

So what does all this mean if you want to try melatonin as a supplement? Melatonin has been shown to be safe in healthy people when used for up to three months at the correct dosage.

Over The Counter Melatonin

- When taken several hours before sleep, Melatonin can shift the biological clock earlier, making a better environment for falling asleep and waking up on time.
- When taken in the correct dose (0.3-1 mg), it can be effective for shift workers and people with circadian rhythm disorders.
- However, most Melatonin sold over the counter is packaged in doses ranging from one milligram to 10 milligrams, with most doses containing double or triple the amount that is needed to be effective for the population that will benefit from its use.

Other Possible Uses for Melatonin

- As an anti-oxidant Melatonin acts upon free radicals. It may reduce damage caused by Parkinson's disease, and can have an anti-aging effect.
- In the elderly, it has shown some promise in managing a type of insomnia called early morning awakenings ; but this area needs more study and does not take into account medications that may interact with melatonin.

Caution Should Be Taken When Using Melatonin

- It should be used under the guidance of a doctor and sleep professional.
- It should be used at the correct dosage.
- It should be taken about 90 minutes before lights out.
- It should be used for a short time (less than three months).
- It should never be used in combination with other sleep inducing medications.
- It should never be used with alcohol.
- It should never be used with children younger than 18.
- There are possible interaction effects that could change the effectiveness of your current medication regimen.

There are new and exciting experiments with patches for delivery of melatonin for use by shift workers and others who have work environments that put their regular circadian clocks to the test. Tart cherries contain a natural melatonin, and there is research to show that drinking tart cherry juice can help with insomnia. There are vitamins and minerals -- vitamin D, the B vitamins, folic acid and calcium -- that have been shown to help with both energy and relaxation.

At the end of the day (no pun intended), your first line of defense for sleep problems is good health and good sleep hygiene. Make it a habit to prepare your body and your mind at the end of every day to get the rest you need. Try that first before you start looking for something else. And when you do look, be careful.

*Michael J. Breus, Ph.D.
The Sleep Doctor™*

Everything you do, you do better with a good night's sleep™
www.thesleepdoctor.com
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Follow Dr. Michael J. Breus on Twitter: www.twitter.com/thesleepdoctor