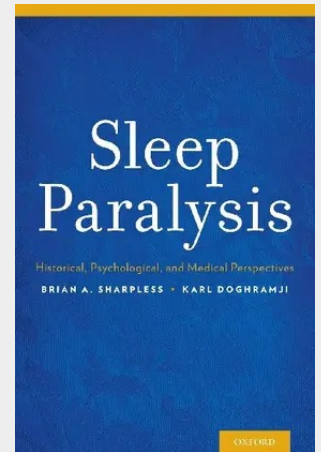


Sleep Paralysis

Historical, Psychological, and Medical Perspectives

Sleep paralysis (characterized by an inability to move, conscious awareness in sleep, and vivid hallucinations) has a history that spans over two-thousand years. However, despite this expansive history, it is only in recent times that a scientific evidence base has accrued. The authors explore sleep paralysis from a range of historical perspectives, placing the phenomenon in a context relevant to clinicians and researchers. Dr. Brian Sharpless and Dr. Karl Doghramji's *Sleep Paralysis: Historical, Psychological, and Medical Perspectives* examines and synthesizes theoretical and empirical literature on sleep disorder. With a focus on phenomenology and prevalence of sleep paralysis, the book situates the disorder within cultural and historical contexts. Sleep paralysis is found to be a well-described, REM-based phenomenon with a number of known behavioral and psychological correlates. The authors compile and summarize the associated features, diagnostic issues, prevalence rates, and potential etiologies. The clinical ramifications of sleep paralysis are also thoroughly examined in this important text. The authors evaluate the available assessment instruments, provide guidance on differential diagnosis, and compile what is known about its clinical impacts. Although a number of individuals are troubled by sleep paralysis, no empirically-established treatments are available. The authors present medication guidance and a brief five session cognitive-behavioral treatment (with a corresponding adherence measure and assessment instrument) for chronic cases.

Humans throughout history have described a peculiar state between wakefulness and sleep during which they are consciously aware of their surroundings, but physically paralyzed. Sleep paralysis is also commonly accompanied by high levels of fear, feelings of suffocation, and hallucinations (i.e., waking dreams). Early interpretations of this event were that it was an actual attack by malevolent and supernatural entities such as demons, ghosts, or witches. Some of these beliefs persist to the present day in the form of nocturnal visitations by extraterrestrials and shadow people. *Sleep Paralysis: Historical, Psychological, and Medical Perspectives* offers the first comprehensive examination of sleep paralysis from scientific and cultural perspectives. Drs. Brian Sharpless and Karl Doghramji synthesize the many literatures while providing practical guidance for the diagnosis and treatment of sleep paralysis. Included are medication suggestions and a new psychotherapy manual for mental health professionals. The result is a volume that illuminates the cultural, medical, and intellectual importance of this understudied phenomenon.



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