Department of Psychology
The University of Hong Kong
香港大學心理學系

Insomnia: Epidemiology, Neurocognitive Mechanisms, and Insights

12:00 p.m. – 1:00 p.m. │ October 13, 2016 (Thursday)
Rm 813, 8/F, The Jockey Club Tower │ Centennial Campus │ The University of Hong Kong

Dr. Sooyeon Suh
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Abstract
Insomnia disorder is a heterogeneous disorder characterized by diverse symptoms, high comorbidities, and multiple episodes and relapses. Recent studies on insomnia disorder emphasize that identifying insomnia subtypes based on longitudinal and large datasets may be helpful in guiding further research and treatment for this population. One such subtype and also one of the most common subtypes of insomnia is persistent insomnia, which is characterized by multiple episodes and relapses over long periods of time. In this presentation, I will present data from a longitudinal cohort study investigating the longitudinal course of insomnia, and associated risk factors such as depression and suicidal ideation. In addition, I will also present neuroimaging data on individuals who have persistent insomnia compared to those who are good sleepers. Several past studies have indicated that insomnia patients are characterized by failure of wake-promoting brain structures to decline from functioning from wake to sleep, along with reduced volume or density in discrete structural areas such as the hippocampus, orbitofrontal cortex, and the parietal cortex. Recent findings emphasize that brain mechanisms underlying insomnia disorder are not restricted to the dysfunction of discrete brain structures, but rather involve abnormalities in specific neural networks. Persistent insomnia patients may have structural network alterations that are associated with core symptoms of insomnia, and I will focus on a recent study that investigated structural connectivity in the default mode network in persistent insomnia patients. Finally, I will discuss the clinical implications of both epidemiologic and neuroimaging research, and utilizing non-pharmacological interventions to treat insomnia as well as improving other comorbid conditions.

About the Speaker
Sooyeon (Aly) Suh is a clinical psychology professor at Sungshin Women's University in Seoul, Korea and scientific advisory at Stanford University in the Department of Psychiatry. Professor Suh's research focuses on behavioral sleep medicine, including the epidemiology and underlying neurocognitive mechanisms of insomnia disorder, and also applying non-pharmacological interventions of insomnia to specific populations, such as PTSD patients, shift workers, and patients in primary care. Her secondary research interest includes suicide prevention, and physiological indices (e.g., heart rate variability) and biomarkers (e.g., inflammatory markers) that can explain mechanisms associated with psychopathology comorbid with chronic illness. She has authored or co-authored several papers and chapters on these topics.

~All are Welcome~

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