

**MCGILL REFRESHER COURSE FOR
FAMILY PHYSICIANS
TUESDAY DECEMBER 3 2019**

**Insomnia in the elderly:
A Review**

M. Elie, M.D., FRCPC

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

NIL

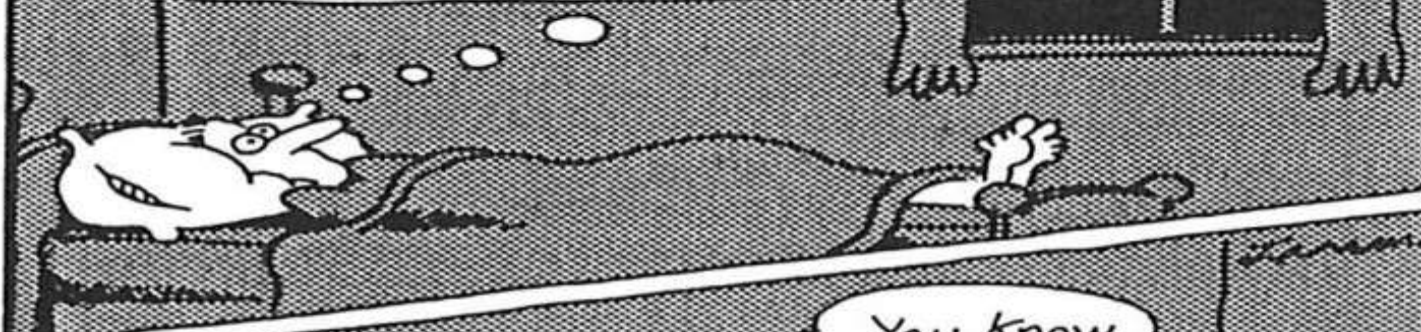
OBJECTIVES

- 1) To review sleep changes that occur with aging.
- 2) To review differential diagnosis of sleep disorders in the elderly
- 3) To address different therapeutic options (non-pharmacological and pharmacological) in the treatment of insomnia in the elderly.

DEFINITION

“A complaint of difficulty initiating sleep or maintaining sleep or waking up too early or sleep that is nonrestorative or poor quality - occurs despite an opportunity for sleep and produces deficits in daytime function”

I wonder if she knows I exist... Should I call her? Maybe she doesn't even know I exist? Well, maybe she does... I'll call her. No, wait!...I'm not sure if she knows I exist... Dang!



You know, I think I really like vanilla.



Same planet, different worlds

WHY BOTHER?

2012

12-13%

2020

20%

> 65

WHY BOTHER?

Prevalance ...>65

(Great Dependence on Definition and
Population)

- 20% Chronic
- 50 % Episodic

WHY BOTHER?

- ❑ Quality of life (fatigue, sleepiness, tensions...)
- ❑ Performance (subjective vs objective)
- ❑ Comorbidities (cardiovascular, Psychiatric, others...)

TYPES OF INSOMNIA

Primary vs Secondary

1986



“Go back to sleep, Chuck. You’re just havin’ a nightmare
— of course, we *are* still in hell.”

PRIMARY INSOMNIA

No obvious cause found....

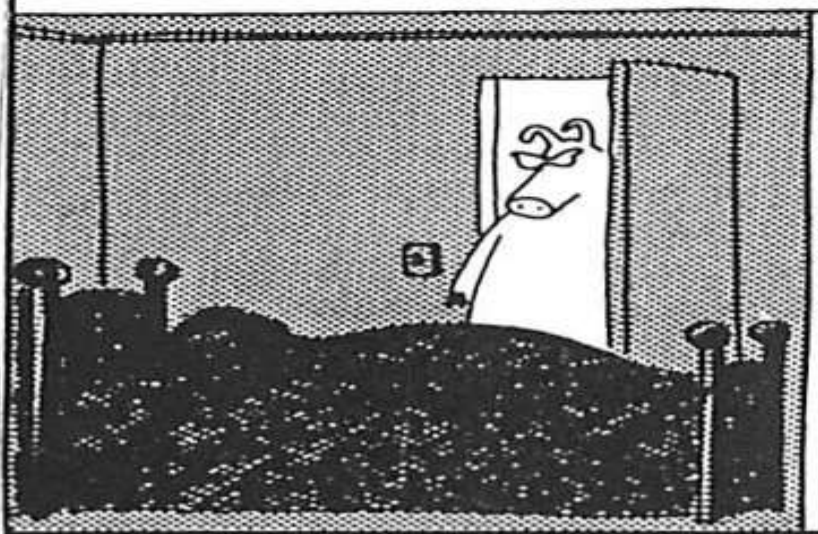
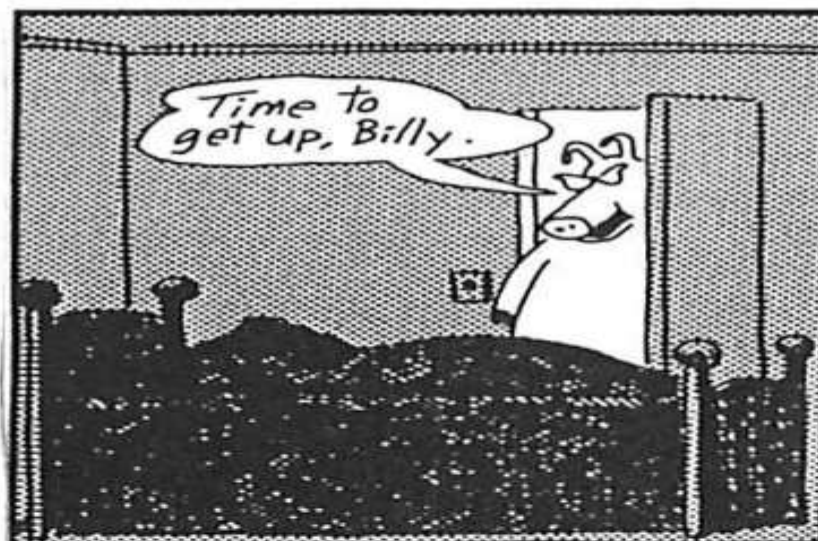
What are normal “aging” sleep changes?

SLEEP CHANGES AS WE AGE

- Phase advance
- ↓ Stage 3 – 4 (deep sleep)
- ↑ Micro arousals and awakenings

PRIMARY INSOMNIA – CONT'D

When to treat???



Piglet practical jokes

SECONDARY INSOMNIA

Secondary to.... Psychiatric...

Medical – Neurological

Medications...

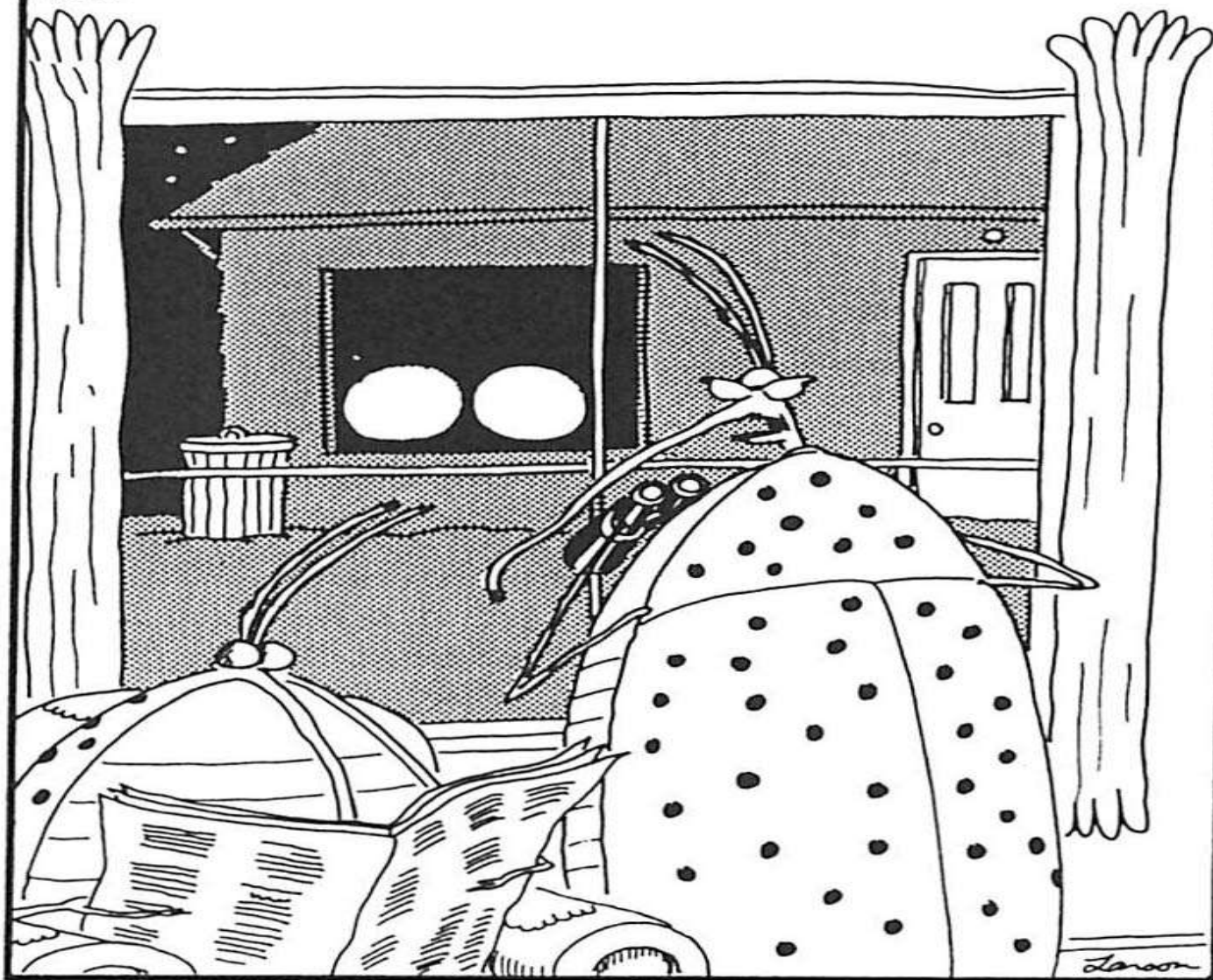
Other - Apnea (obstructive-Central)

- Restless legs,
limb movement...

EVALUATION

- History, History, History...
- Identify potential reversible causes:
 - Physical
 - Meds – ETOH – Tobacco
 - Evaluation... Sleep lab...

1986



“Nik! The fireflies across the street —
I think they’re mooning us!”

MANAGEMENT

“Primum non Nocere”

MANAGEMENT – CONT'D

Non-Pharmacological

- Reverse the reversible...
- Sleep hygiene...Habits...
- Stimulus control...TV...
- Exercise / CBT (Cochrane)

MANAGEMENT – CONT'D

Pharmacological

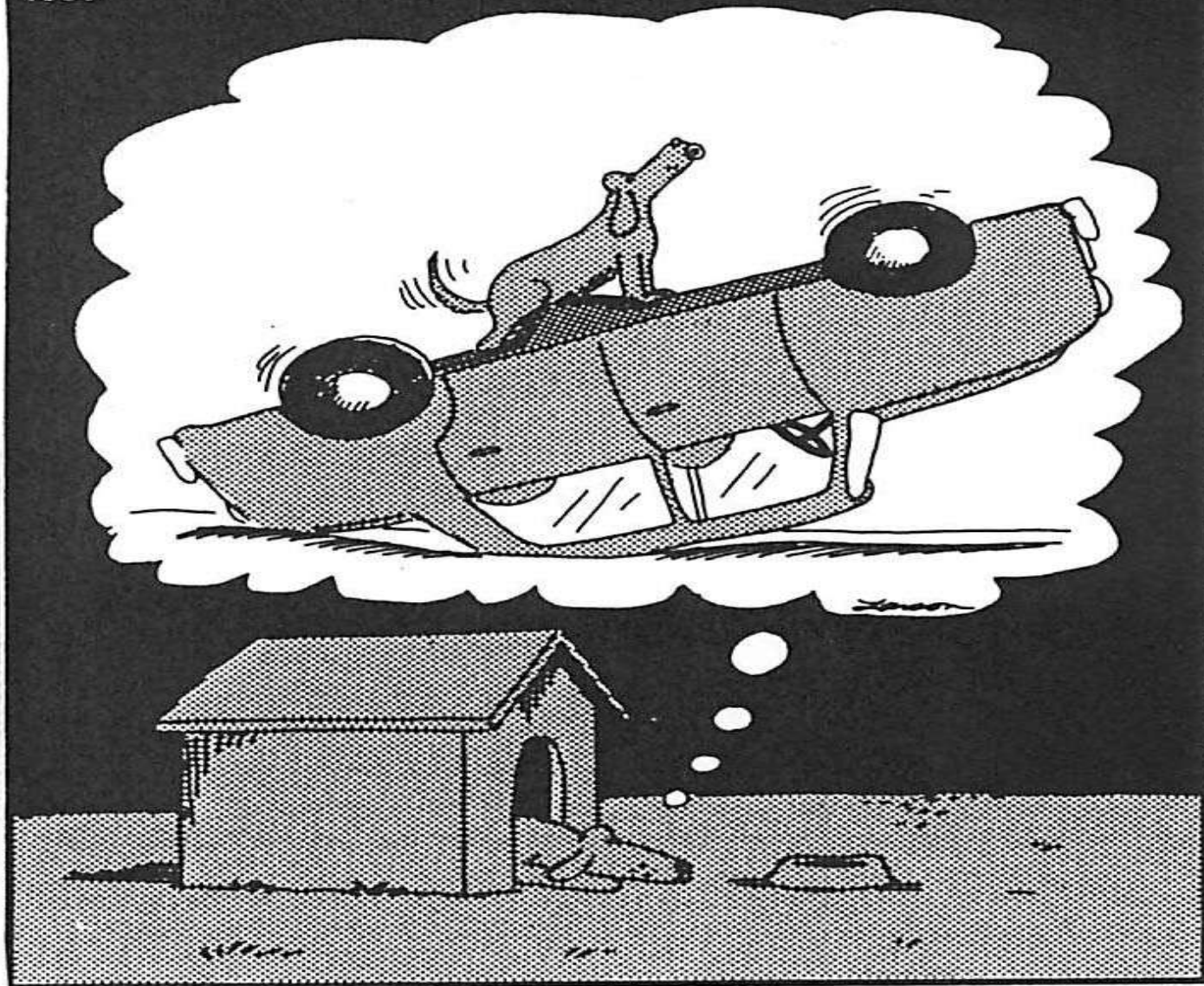
- Hypnotics (Zopiclone, Zolpiderm)
- Trazodone...
- Mirtazapine...
- BDZ (“The bad boys”)
- Quetiapine (off label)
- Others... (Doxepine, TCA, Melatonin...)

BUT: Short course...side effects –
dependence...

MANAGEMENT – CONT'D

Optimally: combine and taper meds...if possible

1988



When car chasers dream

QUESTIONS/ COMMENTS
