The study evaluated if use of sleep medications was associated with increased risk of developing AD and if that association differed between males and females: males who reported use of sleep medication, regardless of having a sleep disturbance, were at increased risk of developing AD (for men without a sleep disturbance $HR = 3.604; p = 0.0001$). By contrast, in females, risk for developing AD varied by the presence of a sleep disturbance. Compared to the reference group (females without a sleep disturbance and no sleep medication use), females who reported a sleep disturbance and use of sleep medication were at a 35.2% reduced risk of developing AD ($HR = 0.648; p = 0.011$) while, those not reporting a sleep disturbance but were taking sleep medications were at 3.9 times increased risk in the hazards of developing AD ($HR = 3.916; p = 0.0001$).

Although this study is observational in nature and therefore does not prove that the use of sleep medication is harmful, it is recommended that health care providers consider alternative, nonpharmacological approaches to treat sleep disorders in older adults. Further research is needed to examine sex differences and how they may relate to the differences associated with sleep disturbances and risk for AD.

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