DISCOVER SLEEP MEDICINE
An Integrative Subspecialty
As an undergraduate or graduate medical trainee, you are more than likely feeling the impact that sleep deprivation can have on every aspect of your physical health and mental well-being. Have you ever thought of helping millions in need of care for a sleep problem by becoming a board certified sleep medicine physician?

This brochure is intended to provide medical students with an overview of the subspecialty of sleep medicine. Discover the field of sleep medicine and the profound impact you can have on the lives of others suffering from sleep disorders.

Sleep plays a vital role in maintaining proper health and safety by renewing our mental and physical health each day. Still, about 70 million Americans suffer from a sleep problem, and nearly 60 percent have a chronic sleep illness. Due to the ongoing competition between sleep and lifestyle, our nation’s sleep problem is so widespread that the CDC has called insufficient sleep “a public health epidemic.” Join the field of sleep medicine and help tackle this epidemic head on.

Treating patients with sleep illness involves an intriguing blend of physiology, neurology, and psychiatry in patients of all ages. Diverse sleep problems include insomnia, sleep-related breathing disorders such as obstructive sleep apnea, hypersomnias such as narcolepsy, movement disorders such as restless leg syndrome, circadian rhythm disorders such as delayed sleep phase disorder and shift work disorder and parasomnias such as nightmare disorder and sleepwalking.

Left untreated, sleep illness increases the risk of chronic medical problems such as obesity, heart disease, type 2 diabetes, depression and stroke. These health risks are reduced through effective behavioral, pharmacological and medical treatments for sleep illness, which improve quality of life by restoring healthy sleep and maximizing daytime alertness.

In a nation where millions of people are struggling to sleep well at night and stay awake during the day, the need for board certified sleep medicine physicians is great.
A sleep specialist is a physician who is board certified in the subspecialty of sleep medicine and specializes in the clinical assessment, physiologic testing, diagnosis, management and prevention of sleep and circadian rhythm disorders. Sleep specialists treat patients of any age and use multidisciplinary approaches. Disorders managed by sleep specialists include:

- sleep related breathing disorders
- insomnia
- hypersomnia
- circadian rhythm sleep disorders
- parasomnias
- sleep related movement disorders

A sleep specialist has all the skills necessary to diagnose and treat sleep disorders. Board certification shows a level of dedication and comprehensive understanding of the field of sleep medicine.

“I was drawn to sleep medicine by its truly multidisciplinary nature. In one clinic session I can see patients presenting with sleep complaints stemming from bipolar disorder, seizures, or COPD. This is a rewarding specialty that is unique in its breadth.”  Daniel Herrick, MD, Dartmouth College

Sleep medicine is an exciting and challenging integrative field covering much of the human body including the pulmonary, endocrine, respiratory, muscular and nervous systems. This gives sleep specialists the flexibility to pursue diverse interests within the field of sleep medicine.

Sleep specialists can come from a variety of primary specialties. A subspecialty certification in sleep medicine is available from the following member boards of the American Board of Medical Specialties:

- American Board of Internal Medicine
- American Board of Psychiatry and Neurology
- American Board of Family Medicine
- American Board of Pediatrics
- American Board of Anesthesiology
- American Board of Otolaryngology
Sleep specialists perform a variety of roles in the medical community by collaborating with a diverse array of medical professionals. Such collaboration might include nurses, physician assistants, sleep technologists, respiratory therapists and many others.

**Patient Care**
For many sleep specialists, direct patient care is their primary daily activity. Sleep specialists care for patients with a number of sleep disorders in various settings, such as in the hospital setting, in an office setting or at one of 2,500 AASM Accredited Sleep Centers across the country. AASM Accredited Sleep Centers are the gold standard in patient care for sleep disorders, providing all levels of patient care.

**Education**
Many sleep specialists teach medical students, residents and fellows. Often, sleep specialists are involved in sleep medicine at a teaching hospital which is affiliated with a medical school. Many teaching hospitals and medical schools have a sleep center of their own, allowing fellows the ability to gain hands on experience.

**Administration**
A number of sleep specialists are involved in the business of medicine. AASM Accredited Sleep Centers are administered by sleep specialists. Due to the multidisciplinary approach of the field, sleep specialists are uniquely qualified to work within all levels of medical administration.

**Research**
Sleep is an exciting and ever changing field that fosters research in various avenues. Sleep specialists can perform research as their primary activity in institutions such as: academic, industry, government or in practice. Sleep research has a diverse scope that runs the gamut from basic science to patient-oriented research to population health.

“Sleep medicine professionals provide care for one third of human life, a critical third that has direct impact on every aspect of health. By transcending the traditional organ-based boundaries of medical disciplines, the field of sleep medicine allows the specialist to provide comprehensive care that can dramatically improve patients’ well-being and quality of life.”

*M. Safwan Badr, MD, Wayne State University, Past President, AASM*
Following successful completion of a four-year, accredited medical school curriculum, those interested in sleep medicine will enter a residency in a specialty that offers a sleep medicine subspecialty. The majority of sleep medicine physicians specialize in internal medicine, psychiatry and neurology. However, other specialties including family medicine, otolaryngology, pediatrics and anesthesiology can be a pathway to entering a fellowship and practicing sleep medicine.

HOW DO I BECOME A SLEEP SPECIALIST?

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THE SLEEP MEDICINE FELLOWSHIP PROGRAM

Following a residency program in a specialty related to sleep, those interested in sleep medicine participate in a one-year sleep medicine fellowship. A sleep medicine fellowship is designed to provide thorough clinical training as well as research experience in the field of sleep medicine. During the program, fellows learn about the normal mechanisms of sleep physiology and the pathophysiology of sleep disorders. Fellows also gain competence in the diagnosis and treatment of sleep disorders and learn to interpret procedures performed in the sleep disorders center. Sleep medicine fellowships provide clinical training, developing these skills in an environment of scholarship and inquiry, and participate in the interdisciplinary care of patients of all ages. The fellowship incorporates aspects of internal medicine, pediatrics, psychiatry, neurology, surgery, epidemiology and basic science.

To learn more about sleep medicine fellowships, visit the National Residency Match Program website at http://www.nrmp.org/fellowships/sleep-medicine-match/

WHY BECOME A SLEEP SPECIALIST?

The job of a sleep specialist is a professionally and personally rewarding experience that allows you to improve public health and safety by treating those with sleep disorders. The multidisciplinary nature of sleep is professionally challenging and allows you to assist in achieving optimal health for your patients.
The American Academy of Sleep Medicine (AASM) is the only professional society dedicated exclusively to the medical subspecialty of sleep medicine. As the leading voice in the sleep field, the AASM sets standards and promotes excellence in health care, education and research. Established in 1975, the AASM has a combined membership of more than 11,000 accredited member sleep centers and individual members, including physicians, scientists and other health care professionals. From insomnia to sleep apnea, the AASM considers sleep disorders an illness that has reached epidemic proportions. Board certified sleep medicine physicians in an AASM Accredited Sleep Center provide effective treatment.

The AASM Vision is to achieve optimal health through better sleep.

The AASM Mission is to improve sleep health and promotes high quality patient centered care through advocacy, education, strategic research, and practice standards.

Being a specialist in sleep medicine challenges me to raise awareness about sleep and its disorders, while affording me the opportunity to provide patients an avenue for diagnosis and treatment.”

Edward Mezerhane, MD, Sleep Medicine Specialists of South Florida
JOIN THE AASM!

Discover the field of sleep medicine with an American Academy of Sleep Medicine student membership. Medical students receive great benefits that will help you to learn the basics, stay up-to-date on hot topics and network with sleep specialists. **Student membership is only $50!**

**PEER-REVIEWED JOURNALS**

Your student membership will grant you access to the Journal *SLEEP* and the *Journal of Clinical Sleep Medicine*, two top-rated peer-reviewed scientific journals.

**MEMBERS-ONLY ACCESS**

Explore all that the AASM has to offer with members-only access to the AASM website, as well as weekly email updates to keep you current.

**DISCOUNTS ON EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES**

Learn all there is to know about sleep with member discounts on AASM courses and educational products!

Visit [aasmnet.org/membership.aspx](http://aasmnet.org/membership.aspx) to apply online or download an application.

**INTERESTED IN LEARNING MORE?**

SLEEP, the Annual Meeting of the Associated Professional Sleep Societies, LLC (APSS), is the only five-day meeting in the nation with scientific sessions and an exhibition hall focused solely on sleep medicine and sleep research. Visit [www.sleepmeeting.org](http://www.sleepmeeting.org) to explore the field of sleep medicine and network with sleep professionals!

**DO YOU HAVE RESEARCH TO SHARE?**

Showcase your findings at SLEEP! By submitting an abstract, you can ensure that your scientific research is seen by leading physicians and researchers in the field. Researchers have the option of presenting the abstracts a poster display or as an oral presentation during a SLEEP session. Visit our website for details about this year’s deadlines.

*Learn more about the SLEEP meeting at [www.sleepmeeting.org](http://www.sleepmeeting.org)*