Case Studies – Overview of Sleep Disorders

Case 1

A 52 year old obese male presents to the Sleep Medicine Clinic following a referral by his primary care physician. He has been complaining of symptoms of fatigue during the day, increased irritability, awakening unrefreshed, and frequent morning headaches. His wife additionally reports that he has been snoring loudly for years, and on some nights she becomes frightened because he seems to stop breathing for several seconds.

1) What other history might be pertinent?
2) What additional aspects of the examination are important?
3) What is a differential diagnosis? The likely diagnosis?
4) What diagnostic evaluation would be indicated?
5) What are some therapeutic options?
6) What is the prognosis?

Case 2

A 48 year old male presents to the Sleep Medicine Clinic with symptoms of excessive daytime sleepiness. He thinks he sleeps well at night, but does note strange dreams that seem to happen very early in the night. These symptoms started in late adolescence. He has had several frightening episodes of falling asleep for several seconds during the day while driving. Equally concerning, he has had infrequent episodes of actually falling to the floor and being unable to move for several minutes during parties while he was telling jokes and laughing with his friends.

1) What other history is pertinent?
2) What is a differential diagnosis?
3) What diagnostic evaluation is indicated?
4) What will this test likely show?
5) What is the effective medication for this disorder that must be prescribed with extreme caution, and why?