

# What are the latest treatments for treating insomnia and how effective are they?

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Sources: The Guardian, Sleep Foundation, Mayo Clinic, and Healthline

Summary: Insomnia has gained notoriety over the years. Acute and chronic insomnia play a pivotal role in limited social interaction and functions, increased risk of health conditions such as: high blood pressure, heart disease and diabetes. With notoriety gained over the years, CBT treatment was discovered as a treatment for insomnia. CBT treatment consists of psychological techniques that can help the patient become cured or lessen the severity of their insomnia. A notable insomniac is Hugh Selsick who had insomnia for a year and pursued a career in helping other insomniacs.

Sleep is a complex & dynamic process that influences how we function throughout the day. Those who suffer from insomnia have limited social interaction and functioning as they undergo the negative effects of sleep deprivation. Treatments in the past were targeted to treat depression and anxiety as insomnia was considered a symptom of the two. The recent discovery of CBT(Cognitive Behavioural Treatment) offers insomniacs a solution to effectively treat insomnia. CBT treats the patient through psychological therapy, as opposed to an effective sleeping pill such as Neomorexint.



Insomnia is a severe sleeping disorder that has gained notoriety over the past years. The two common types of insomnia are acute and chronic insomnia. A person with chronic insomnia has trouble falling asleep or staying asleep at least three nights per week for three months or longer; while a person with acute insomnia has trouble falling or staying asleep for three months or less. With increasing recognition of insomnia CBT was discovered for treating insomnia.

CBT is a structured program that allows the patient to further understand the perpetuating factors that worsens their insomnia. CBT promotes healthy sleeping habits and allows the patient to take note of unhealthy behavior that aids their insomnia. A sleep therapist may recommend various techniques to help insomniacs achieve better sleep. Some notable examples are: Relaxation treatment, Sleep environment improvement, and stimulus control therapy.

Treating insomnia can vary according to the patient's type of insomnia. Acute insomnia can be best treated with sleeping pills such as: zolpidem (Ambien) eszopiclone (Lunesta) zaleplon (Sonata) doxepin (Silenor) ramelteon (Rozerem) suvorexant (Belsomra) temazepam (Restoril). The

sleeping pills listed provide immediate effective relief for stress or grief, However they aren't recommended for treating long term insomnia as they have side effects such as: "Daytime sleepiness, memory loss, sleepwalking" etc. Chronic insomnia can be best treated through undergoing CBT treatment. The two types of chronic insomnia are primary and secondary. "Primary chronic insomnia may be related to changes in levels of certain brain chemicals, but research is ongoing." "Secondary chronic insomnia is caused by other conditions or situations." Treating primary chronic insomnia may be difficult at the moment as research is still ongoing however CBT treatment can prove beneficial to both types of chronic insomnia.

Hugh Selsick was nineteen years old when he had insomnia. He pursued a postgraduate degree in physiology. "He was astonished to find a widespread lack of interest within psychiatry toward insomnia." Despite being cured of his insomnia at the age of twenty years old he pursued his fascination with the lack of interest in insomnia. Today he runs a London clinic with another consultant. "Selsick believes that only by treating insomnia as a psychiatric disorder, with degrees of severity that range from mild to chronic, can the health service begin to develop and prescribe appropriate treatments." Selsick studies on physiology and personal experience with treating his own insomnia allowed him to provide an effective outlet for insomniacs to get proper effective treatment.

In May 2016, Handler joined Selsick's five-week course, along with nine other patients.



A patient at the sleep clinic. Photograph: Sarah Lee/The Guardian

The clinic's primary goal is to alleviate the obstacles insomniacs are met with through CBT treatment. Various techniques were used during the five-week course. A sleeping diary was used to show what time they get up, recording the time they go to sleep, how long it took to go to sleep and how many times they woke up. Naps and lie-ins were prohibited and patients were taught methods to feel comfortable sleeping in their room to get rid of the frustration and fear.



Insomnia has deviated from its complex nature and is becoming an understood sleeping disorder and a serious issue many people face. With the recent breakthroughs medical professionals can properly treat those who suffer from insomnia with CBT.

Journal reference: “New Research: Identify and Treat Insomnia.” *Sleep Foundation*, National Sleep Foundation, 28 July 2020, [www.sleepfoundation.org/articles/new-research-identify-and-treat-insomnia-early-reduce-risk-other-illnesses](http://www.sleepfoundation.org/articles/new-research-identify-and-treat-insomnia-early-reduce-risk-other-illnesses).

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