



Sleep Disorders Australia

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Media Release

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Restless Legs Syndrome (RLS), also known as Willis-Ekbom Disease (WED), is a neurological disorder characterised by an irresistible urge to move the legs or other parts of the body, often accompanied by unusual or unpleasant sensations that may be described as tingling, creeping, and crawling. Some liken the sensation to shooting darts of electricity, or even squirming insects inside the legs. When put into such words it can sound trivial – even the name Restless Legs Syndrome trivializes the torture and pain suffered.

Restless Legs Syndrome can happen at any time of the day but typically happens in the evenings while sitting down or at night in bed when trying to drift off to sleep. As a result RLS can lead to severe sleep deprivation, associated with deleterious health consequences such as higher rates of heart attacks, strokes, obesity, diabetes and a shorter lifespan. Quality of life is also affected through cognitive impairment, social isolation, deterioration of personal relationships, depression and even suicide.

The official RLS Awareness Day is held on 23 September to coincide with the birth date of Professor Karl-Axel Ekbom the Swedish neurologist who first described Restless Legs Syndrome in 1945. The Awareness Day has been celebrated in other countries previously, however this is the second year that the event will officially be celebrated in Australia.

There is so little known or understood about RLS. After all these years the cause of it is still not known - and that needs to change. The Australian RLS Awareness Day is an opportunity to raise awareness and educate the medical community and the general public of not just what RLS but also how it affects people who suffer from it.

RLS Awareness Day 23 September 2020

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Website www.sleepoz.org.au

For more information about Restless Legs Syndrome <https://www.sleepoz.org.au/restless-legs-syndrome>

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About Sleep Disorders Australia

Sleep Disorders Australia (SDA) is Australia's peak patient body for sleep disorders. SDA was founded in 1996 as a not for profit charity. Its mission is to provide information and offer support and assistance to people affected by sleep disorders throughout Australia. SDA also advocates for the needs of people with sleep disorders and raises awareness of sleep disorders and the significance they can have on the lives of those affected by them.

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