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## SLEEP-L: an electronic forum for the sleep community

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SLEEP-L is a listserv-based mailing list that provides a world wide electronic forum for the international community of sleep researchers and sleep-related health professionals. The list is maintained on computing and communications equipment at Queen's University in Kingston, Ontario, Canada, and is accessed via 30 Mbps regional and national connections to the rest of Canada (CA\*net4), the USA (InternetII) and Europe (Dante). SLEEP-L is operated under the auspices of the Canadian Sleep Society/Société Canadienne du Sommeil (CSS/SCS).

The general aim of SLEEP-L is to facilitate communication among sleep researchers and health professionals on all matters related to sleep research and sleep-related health care. More specifically, SLEEP-L provides facilities for the:

- direct relay of information;
- maintenance of archives;
- interactive search of archived material.

### 1. History

SLEEP-L was begun in June 1990 by Dr S.E. Southmayd at Queen's University in Kingston, Ontario, Canada. Subsequently, at the instigation of Dr Southmayd, a small advisory group was formed including Drs A.A. Borbély, R.H. Harper, and A.W. MacLean. From April 1993 to July 1995, a small amount of funding was made available from the Research Department of Kingston Psychiatric Hospital to employ an assistant to handle day-to-day list operations. In July 1995, a grant was obtained from Nellcor Puritan Bennett (Melville) Ltd (previously Melville Diagnostics) to continue these services.

### 2. Membership

SLEEP-L is a private list restricted to the following individuals:

- sleep research scientists;
- health professionals concerned with sleep;
- clinical or scientific trainees in sleep-related specialties;
- members of relevant professional organizations;
- members of relevant commercial organizations;
- other individuals with equivalent qualifications.

In general, members are expected to be members of one or other of the professional societies concerned with scientific or clinical work or to have equivalent status in another relevant body. Since its inception, the membership of SLEEP-L has grown steadily; as of the writing of this article, there were 815 SLEEP-L subscribers.

### 3. Relevant message content

In general, any message relevant to sleep research and sleep-related health care is acceptable on SLEEP-L. Contributions submitted by SLEEP-L members are largely transmitted in the form determined by their author, however, the material is monitored by the list moderator to ensure its relevance to SLEEP-L and its compliance with the SLEEP-L code of conduct.

Examples of past transmissions include: requests for consultation on clinical cases; general requests for information; notifications of positions available; conference announcements; abstracts of conference presentations; general news items of interest to the sleep community; and selected items from the newsletters of several professional associations.

Examples of items that are usually not acceptable include: personal communications intended for a single recipient and commercial advertisements. Recently, a specific policy was developed that outlines message content that is and is not permissible on SLEEP-L (SLEEP-L archive #2003-23; 21 June 2003).

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#### **4. Financial support**

SLEEP-L is a nonprofit facility. There is no fee associated with membership and no cost for use of the central hardware or software. The cost of individual connections to the internet is the responsibility of each SLEEP-L member. The list moderator receives compensation from the CSS/SCS for

the day-to-day operations of the list through an annual contribution supplied by Nellcor Puritan Bennet (Melville) Ltd. Recognition of this support is acknowledged in a monthly “welcome message” distributed to all members.

For further information about becoming a member of SLEEP-L, contact the list moderator, J. Todd Arnedt, PhD, at [sleep-l@post.queensu.ca](mailto:sleep-l@post.queensu.ca).