



Web-Based Programs Could Be Wave Of Health Care Future

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"My husband used to joke with me all the time and say I was like a doll. He'd say, he'd 'lay me down anywhere and your eyes close. You're gone."

Stella Parolisi used to have no trouble sleeping, but two years ago that changed. "It's not like I am □ worrying about things. I don't know what the problem is. I just, wake up," she said.

Stella is like 30 percent of Americans who struggle with insomnia. Now, she is hoping to get rid of those sleepless nights by participating in a study performed by UVa's Dr. Lee Ritterband called Sleeping Healthy Using the Internet or SHUTi.

SHUTi is a web-based program that is different than websites before because it acts as the user's own personal therapist, offering specific, customized tips and instructions.

"The users are asked to put a lot of information into it," explained Dr. Ritterband. "Their sleep habits, their sleep routine, when they are waking and sleeping. And then, the computer can take that information and tailor the program to that individual user's issues."

If the study proves SHUTi is successful in combating insomnia, Dr. Ritterband says it could represent the wave of the future in health care; a health care that makes help more accessible and more affordable.

"People can go online. They can identify the program that might be helpful to them. They can pay their subscription. It would [be] incredibly cheaper than going to a hospital or seeing a therapist," cited the doctor.

Today, Stella is tirelessly working to be a good sleeper again. She is diligently filling out her online sleep diary and even wears a watch that monitors her activity so Dr. Ritterband can tell when she is awake and when she is asleep.

She is in her seventh week of the study now and she is hopeful to be like a 'doll' again. "I slept three hours in a row in one segment, which is really good," she said of her experience so far with the study.

The SHUTi study is still in its infancy and is accepting participants. In addition to the treatment, participants also get paid \$100.00.

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