Sleep Reset: The Truth Of Insomnia & Sleeping Pills Transcript

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Introduction and Yuna Kim's Sleep Story

This is Doctor Talks, real talk from real doctors on the issues that matter to you most. Hi, it's Dr. Audrey Wells again. I'm your host for the Sleep Deep Summit, new approaches at treating sleep apnea and insomnia.

My next guest is Yuna Kim, and she is the founder and CEO of Sleep Reset. Sleep Reset is a personalized science-backed sleep program, which is clinically proven to reduce insomnia symptoms.

And especially relevant to our discussion today is her personal experience in dealing with a diagnosis of sleep apnea and insomnia. I imagine this is what drove her desire to make a real difference in the lives of others.

And we're going to get into it. Welcome, Yuna Kim. Thank you for having me, Dr. Wells. Yeah, it's great to have you and kind of talk about someone who's had personal experience with the two diagnoses that we're addressing in this summit.

So I'm wondering if you can walk us through when the first one happened and what the circumstances were. Yeah, so it was around 2020 where things got a little crazy with like, you know, not no longer going to the office anymore we're working from home, and also as a business owner.

you, there's a lot more changes that are happening. And I don't know if that's what's caused it or not, but that's around when I started getting these symptoms around.

I couldn't fall asleep at night. So at first it started off with like 30 minutes before I used to sleep so well. Like I just like go to sleep right away, but 30 minutes.

And at some point it's like now two hours to fall asleep. And I wake up in the middle of the night, can't fall back asleep. And it just ended up being like a debilitating thing.

And, and at that time. I thought that the best thing that I could do if I cannot fall asleep is to just try to go to bed even earlier. So it got to a point where I was like, at 7 PM, I'm in bed trying to fall asleep.

And now that I'm in this space and I know what we're asking our members to do at Sleep Reset, that's the worst thing that you can do. But I was doing all of that.

And I bought all the gadgets possible. I was taking all these sleeping pills. It started off with melatonin and then more stronger sleeping pills. You know, some of them were able to, you know, get me to fall asleep, but then I would wake up feeling like a zombie, like super groggy.

And I remember going to work, obviously, like on Zoom and telling my team members, hey, my brain is not working very well. And yeah, it was like a period where I felt so irritable.

I felt like not not like myself.

Insomnia, Waitlists, and Access to Care

I can tell you a little bit more about how that like evolved into this whole thing. But yeah, that's how it started. Yeah. And I want to just say that that experience is so common among people who start having issues with their sleep and start trying to troubleshoot it.

A very common response is going to bed earlier just to be there in case you fall asleep. Yeah. And so what happened next? What did you do? After my foray into all the wearables, like all the supplements and sleeping pills.

And at one point I realized, okay, I can't live like this anymore. So I signed up for Stanford sleep clinic to get CBTI sessions. And then I was waitlisted for six months.

And you know, that's their cognitive behavioral therapy for insomnia program. Yeah, that's right. because I was google searching like doing all these research and I learned that CBTI is like the golden treatment for insomnia but then you know when you're when you're on a waitlist for six months and you struggle with sleep and it's sleep is a thing where you don't sleep even one day it just like that day is all like done right and so yeah being on a six months waitlist was like a death sentence to me and it was kind of like interesting coincidental thing where At that time, I was running a company called Simple Habit, which had over 7 million customers that were using our product, our meditation app to meditate.

And actually, less than 10% of our meditation content was designed for sleep, but it represented over 70% of user engagement. Oh, that's so fascinating.

I remember, you know, I was like, secretly struggling with insomnia. And then my data scientist is like, insomnia is the reason why people are using our product.

And so I started interviewing all these customers. And one thing that we found is that all these people were using our product because they don't want to use sleeping pills.

So anyways, when I was on a wait list, that's how, yeah, I learned that access to care for sleep is not really there. Yeah. Yeah. It's a huge problem.

There's not enough sleep medicine physicians. There's also not enough clinical psychologists who do the CBTI technique for insomnia. So I imagine that this was kind of strange being in this place where you had a product that addresses insomnia.

And at the same time, you're struggling yourself And lack of sleep is kind of the great equalizer, right? It will bring anybody to their knees if you're not sleeping well.

So, you know, this is, so you were trying to kind of cope with it and I wonder how did you end up handling it? Actually, so when I was on this wait list, I tried a bunch of like sleep coaching, like I went on these sleep coaching websites, trying to get a doctor appointment.

And then at the same time at my work, we had a kind of like project too. So the question that we asked is like, okay, now we are using meditation to help people cope with insomnia, but how can we actually help them like address the root cause of insomnia?

And so then we actually, our company started working with doctors at the Stanford Sleep Clinic to digitize what they do at the clinic. And it's interesting because doctors were saying, you know, actually, like this thing, this doesn't have to be in person.

We can digitize this and provide access to care. And so we built this on the side so we can offer it to our Simple Habit customers, actually. And I happened to be the first customer for this product because I was still on a wait list.

And yeah, so that program, which now became Sleep Reset, is like where you do a sleep logging, manual sleep logging, unlike the wearables where like they keep on telling you you didn't sleep well, you didn't sleep well.

It just only causes more anxiety.

Building Sleep Reset and Early Recovery

You are doing like manual sleep logging, there's educational exercises, but most importantly, there was a human sleep coach that like really empathize with this problem.

And she would actually look at my data and be like, and she found a lot of so I thought that sleep hygiene wise, I was like a plus. that's what a lot of people with insomnia think because they've done so much right and nothing has worked but she has helped me understand some of the issues that I was having and I started like making some changes to it and actually within four weeks insomnia basically got cured for me and I think the root of it is that people who have insomnia end up creating this bad relationship with sleep that was my problem so because I was spending two hours in bed, unable to fall asleep.

Now, whenever I see that mattress, it's a source of stress and anxiety, right? And I have no idea that was the root cause of my insomnia. I couldn't even imagine that that, like, if somebody pitched me on that or somebody pitched me that, hey, addressing that will solve your insomnia, like, I wouldn't have believed it.

But in four weeks, that's how, like, I ended up resolving it. And I can tell you a little bit about the sleep apnea journey also, but that's how my sleep started getting better.

Yeah. Yeah, what you're describing is that cognitive pairing with not being able to sleep and your bed. And I think, you know, it is a challenge. I've had that experience myself where I'm trying to convince somebody that this is a real thing.

And I kind of make the analogy that, you know, if you want to lose weight, don't walk into your kitchen. Or you have another cognitive pairing of when you get into your car, you put your seatbelt on mindlessly out of habit.

That movement is now in your subconscious because you've done it so many times. And that cognitive pairing with the bed is definitely a factor for people who struggle with insomnia.

Yeah. And you mentioned too that it's really helpful to have somebody, another person, a live human being there giving you encouragement, looking at your information, you know, that having a dialogue.

And I'm wondering, is that component included with the sleep reset program? Yeah, because I've went through this experience and I've realized how important and critical that is.

It's part of the program. In fact, like critical part of the program. So all of our sleep coaches, they're not AI. A lot of people ask that. In this world of AI, I know there are actual human beings that like live in the United States.

They like look at your data. They care about you. But yeah, that's been, that is part of our program. Oh, that's amazing. And so how did you end up getting diagnosed with sleep apnea?

It sounds like that came later. Yeah. So four weeks into the program, that's where my, like I started sleeping within like 10 minutes. Like it was a miracle, right?

Like I no longer am staring at the ceiling for two hours. And so, and I was still sleep logging and my coach was like, Hey, you know, you're time to fall asleep.

spent time spent in bed awake has reduced drastically. That's awesome. But the sleep quality that you're reporting is still okay. It's not high as we would expect.

Have you ever gotten tested for sleep apnea? And as you can see, like I'm in my mid 30s. I weigh 110 pounds. I would not have thought that I have sleep apnea.

Because when you look at the sleep apnea commercials, it's usually older men who are more overweight. So I never got tested, but she suggested it. And so I actually that's yet another journey.

So I told my doctor that I want to get tested and you have to go through the insurance hurdles where you have to get tested at home for us. And then you go into a clinic.

It took another six months actually to get tested for that. But yeah, I was diagnosed with sleep. Yeah. Yeah. Yeah,

you know, I think that misconception is really rampant that sleep apnea only affects people who are overweight.

It predominantly affects men, predominantly affects, you know, people who are of a certain age.

Sleep Apnea Diagnosis and CPAP Adjustment

And, you know, I can sympathize because one of the things that I've discovered in testing some of these home sleep test devices is that I have sleep apnea and it's quite mild right now.

But I'm sort of capturing the beginning of it, which is no surprise given my family history. But like you, I don't think people would look at someone like me and say that person has sleep apnea.

So one of my missions in life is to dispel that myth. And I think especially for women, it's challenging too, because women tend to arouse more from sleep rather than drop their blood oxygen levels.

Yeah. So I got tested, right? And so I went to my mom and dad. I was like, I don't care if you have symptoms at all, but you need to go get tested. And guess what?

They got their HI of like something in the thirties or forties. Oh my goodness. Yeah. And they had no idea for 50, 60 years. They were both positive for sleep apnea.

Yeah. Oh man. So they're both like, so the CPAP journey is where it's first now. So I got CPAP and I was telling my RT or what is that called? You're right.

The RT. Respiratory therapist. Yeah. In my check-in call after two weeks of using CPAP, I was like, I cannot do this. This is like, you know, like not only does this look ugly, but also like the, the air leaking, I can't deal with it.

And I was going to just like give up on it and just live like it. But then the RT was like, Hey, most people, like if you just like follow through for like 30 days, a lot of people will come out of that saying that this is the best thing in your life.

So because she said that I actually did it. And now I use CPAP every night. I carry it with everywhere I go and I'm a huge CPAP fan. So, like that human element is so needed, which is why actually in our program now so we started off with insomnia, right, like we were, we, we help people fall asleep or stay asleep.

most of our customers start seeing results by week two and most of the results we see in like six to eight weeks but if we start not seeing the sleep quality increase that's when we bring up the sleep apnea testing because also like you kind of need to first fix your insomnia before you get like sleep apnea testing or even like imagine having insomnia and on top of that put CPAP machine on your face like that's just going to accept you're going to have like another sleep anxiety on top of CPAP anxiety I think so anyways that's kind of like what we do now at Sleep Reset.

That's fantastic and I just want to point out the irony that you have a company called Simple Habits And this respiratory therapist is telling you if you can get to the habit phase with the CPAP, then you might grow to like it.

And oh man, there's so many patients that I've treated, like there's some kind of hump that they get over and then it becomes kind of part of the routine.

And helping somebody through that is absolutely critical. And unfortunately, the healthcare delivery system doesn't allow for that human touch very well.

So yeah, I can totally resonate with that experience. And one thing that is a big obstacle for a lot of folks is the mask. Was that part of your challenge is getting used to the mask?

I started off with the big mask. and it was like leaking right and then I started the nasal one and then like nasal there's like a one that's like a tube and then there's like a like a I don't know all the names of it but yeah I had to like

experiment with Saul and on top of that I have like I'm allergic to silicon okay yeah like that crazy I don't under challenge so I need like mask liner so yes I'm in this knee-deep in this exploration yeah Yeah, that's really interesting.

What you're describing is nasal pillows. That's the kind that just fits on the inside of your nostrils. Yeah. And then there's nasal cradle that just kind of goes up to the base of your nose.

Yeah. You know, the silicone allergy can be challenging for sure. You know, even just having silicone on your skin for eight hours for some people is tough.

So the mask liner can help, trial and error. There's quite a bit of that. Are you up to the point where you're able to use CPAP through the whole night at this point?

Yeah, I've been like, I got to that point a year ago, I think it took me like, maybe so that first 30 days was important. It was more like a psychological challenge.

And then the second month is about like not waking up throughout the night because it's not leaking. Kind of like knowing how to adjust your kind of the headband.

Yeah. So yeah, I don't I don't wake up anymore. Like in the middle of the night. My sleep is just so wonderful now. So Oh, that's great. That's really great to hear.

It looks like you're good. I mean, We're kind of in the middle of the day now. You look quite alert and awake. Thank you. So something I coach on quite a bit is how to help people over that psychological resistance.

And I wonder if you can draw on your expertise with habits and just give people who are in that spot where they're still feeling like, oh, I don't want to use this thing.

What can you give them to help them get inspired again? For CPAP machine. Hmm. So in the like habit world of like, we always say, start small, like, if going to the gym for 30 minutes every day is hard start with like just go there for five minutes right like.

I don't know, is that something that you guys would recommend in the CPAP world? That's not a recommendation I got, but actually what helped for me is the testimonials of other people who said, this was so hard, but after it just go through it for 30 days and you're gonna like appreciate me for saying it.

So that's what I did. But yeah, I'm curious what do you recommend for that? Yeah. Yeah, it's a really good question because depending on how a person is reacting, I kind of tailor that approach.

Habits, Mask Challenges, and Family Experience

And I know that brief exposure can be helpful. Sometimes that occurs at night, like just getting used to putting on the mask and falling asleep with it on.

And then if they wake up in the middle of the night, it's okay to take it off and put it to the side, but you still go back the next day and put on the mask and fall asleep.

So that there's the pairing between mask and sleep. Some people can't even tolerate that though. So what I asked them to do is use the mask earlier in the day where there's no pressure to sleep.

And that's really important because then they're not getting agitated at a time when they need to relax to fall asleep. So that practice earlier in the day, start with two minutes, start with five minutes, something bite-sized, and then work up from there.

I see. Yeah. Interesting. Yeah. I think like a part of it was like lowering your own standard. Cause I thought the

success of using CPAP is like, I sleep with it and I love, I need to love it.

Right. But like, this happens with our, our customers too. A lot of our customers are like, I have to, so we ask our customers to sleep in a consistent like bedtime and wake time, right?

So a lot of our customers are like type A's or like, I have failed because I slept 15 minutes later. And you know, we try to like loosen that a little bit saying like, yes, this is what we recommend.

And we really want you to do this, but you're a human and we're gonna be like sleeping for the like every day for the rest of our lives. And there will be days where you would fail.

So maybe like what I love about what you're doing is like lowering that bar a little bit saying like, it's okay not to like sleep through the night with it, but start with it, at least.

And then, and you'll get used to it. Yeah, it took me a while for me to convince my mom and dad to use CPAP also. Like they were diagnosed with sleep apnea.

But my mom was like, I can't do the CPAP thing. And Yeah. For me, what I told her, it wasn't the kind of clinical advice that you gave, which would have been awesome if I did that.

I just said like, just trust me for 30 days. Yeah. And how's she doing now? Oh, they're both like, it's so funny, hilarious going into their like room because they're both using it at night.

And they also, whenever we go for travel, they like bring their CPAP machine. So. That's great. That's really great. Yeah, it's really funny. I think that once you're kind of over that step, you start looking for other people who are using CPAP and it's a great way to connect with them.

It affects everything. Good sleep affects your relationships. It affects your job performance. It affects your mood and how you talk to yourself. So I think it's really worth it to get to that place where your sleep is truly fixed.

So great job at persevering. Thank you. Thank you. You know, as we kind of close here, I just want to underscore that it seems that your own personal experience was a big driver for you to start and fine tune the Sleep Reset program.

Can you tell the audience a little bit more about how it works and where that they could go to find out more?

How Sleep Reset Works and Closing Remarks

Yeah, first of all, you can go to thesleepreset.com and you can take a quiz that will help you understand whether you're the right fit for sleep reset and whether sleep reset can help you improve your sleep.

So it's thesleepreset.com. And how it works is we have you take this quiz to better understand your lifestyle, exactly what are the symptoms that you're having, and it will kind of tell you what would our…

So you would fill out this quiz And then the next day, we'll give you this sleep evaluation that will address some of the potential root causes. Obviously, we won't know all of it in just one survey, but potential areas that we would want to work on.

For example, if I take that quiz a few years ago, it would have probably said, you seem to have sleep anxiety. or like unhealthy relationship with sleep.

And, you know, something that I did not know before. And then based on that, the coach will put a plan for you that will address some of those issues.

And that includes daily logging of your sleep, as well as lessons and exercises that are created by our in-house

sleep doctors, as well as a human sleep coach that's going to text you and stay in connection with you every day or every week, however you'd like.

Yeah, and then we've had like thousands of customers go through our program. And, and if you look at our app store reviews, because our, our program is also delivered via mobile app.

So it's convenient for you on a daily basis. If you go to our app store and look at the reviews, you'll see a lot of people are these are people who've like, been addicted to sleeping pills like Ambien for decades and they weren't able to fall asleep or stay asleep and through this program within like first four to six weeks if not if not like three weeks they start seeing you know huge results Wow, that's fantastic.

And I really encourage people to check it out and see if it's a fit because like you, Yuna, I think people, when they reach out to local clinics, the most common response is that there's a big wait list.

There are simply not enough providers to go around in a one-on-one in-person relationship. Yeah, I really love talking to you today. I think that your experience would resonate with many people watching this summit.

So thank you for sharing that. Oh, thank you. Yeah. And for those of you who are listening to this, I hope you get on your sleep journey and sleep better.

Because once you start sleeping better, your life is wonderful. Yeah. Love it. Great to see you today. Thank you, Dr. Wolf. Thank you for tuning into Dr.

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