Jet Lag Is Avoidable Through Preflight Phase-Shifting

**BY BRUCE JANCIN**

**DENVER —** With the right combination of morning bright light exposure, low-dose melatonin, and gradually advancing bedtimes in the days prior to flying eastward, travelers can avoid the hazards of jet lag, Victoria L. Revell, Ph.D., said at the annual meeting of the Associated Professional Sleep Societies.

“With a little bit of preparation you can arrive with no jet lag, and not waste any days, and be more productive at your meeting, and enjoy your trip,” added her co-investigator, Charmane I. Eastman, Ph.D., professor of psychology and director of the Biological Rhythms Research Laboratory at Rush University Medical Center, Chicago.

The investigators explained that jet lag is the result of misalignment between circadian rhythms and the destination time zone. It is worse after flights eastward because people find it more difficult to phase advance than phase delay. The purpose of pre-trip re-entrainment is to help travelers, once they arrive at their destination, keep their circadian temperature drop where it belongs: during the night, when they’re sleeping.

**The investigators decided low-dose therapy was best; a higher dose led to daytime sleepiness.**

Dr. Revell

*The results were reassuring except that subjects on 3.0 mg/day of melatonin reported a slight increase in daytime sleepiness. It wasn’t enough to pose a safety hazard, but since the efficacy wasn’t significantly greater than with 0.5 mg/day, the investigators decided low-dose therapy was the way to go,* Dr. Revell explained.

Outside of the controlled laboratory setting, Dr. Revell has been joined by numerous friends and colleagues have employed the phase-shift travel preparation method with great success.

The study was supported by the National Institutes of Health. Melatonin and matching placebos were provided by Ecorex Research Laboratories.