

The Role of Amyloid, Tau, and *APOE* Genotype on the Relationship Between Informant-Reported Sleep Disturbance and Alzheimer's Disease Risks

Hyun Kim^{a,b,*}, Alina Levine^c, Daniel Cohen^b, Philip Gehrman^{d,e}, Xi Zhu^{a,b}, Davangere P. Devanand^{a,b,f}, Seonjoo Lee^{c,g} and Terry E. Goldberg^{a,b,h} on behalf of the Alzheimer's Disease Neuroimaging Initiative¹

^a*Department of Psychiatry, Columbia University Irving Medical Center, New York, NY, USA*

^b*Division of Geriatric Psychiatry, New York State Psychiatric Institute, New York, NY, USA*

^c*Division of Mental Health Data Science, New York State Psychiatric Institute, New York, NY, USA*

^d*Department of Psychiatry, Perelman School of Medicine of the University of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia, PA, USA*

^e*Mental Illness Research, Education, and Clinical Center, Corporal Michael J. Crescenz Veterans Affairs Medical Center, Philadelphia, PA, USA*

^f*Department of Neurology, Columbia University Irving Medical Center, New York, NY, USA*

^g*Department of Biostatistics, Mailman School of Public Health, Columbia University, New York, NY, USA*

^h*Department of Anesthesiology, Columbia University Irving Medical Center, New York, NY, USA*

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Abstract.

Background: The association between sleep and Alzheimer's disease (AD) biomarkers are well-established, but little is known about how they interact to change the course of AD.

Objective: To determine the potential interaction between sleep disturbance and A β , tau, and *APOE4* on brain atrophy and cognitive decline.

Methods: Sample included 351 participants (mean age 72.01 \pm 6.67, 50.4% female) who were followed for approximately 5 years as part of the Alzheimer's Disease Neuroimaging Initiative. Informant-reported sleep disturbance (IRSD) was measured using the Neuropsychiatric Inventory (NPI). Changes in magnetic resonance imaging (MRI)-measured AD signature brain regions and cognitive performance and IRSD's interaction with cerebrospinal fluid amyloid- β (A β ₄₂) and p-Tau depositions and *APOE4* status were examined using the linear mixed models.

Results: Baseline IRSD was not significantly associated with the rate of atrophy after adjusting for covariates (age, sex, education, total NPI severity score, and sleep medications). However, there was a significant interaction between IRSD and

¹Data used in preparation of this article were obtained from the Alzheimer's Disease Neuroimaging Initiative (ADNI) database (<http://adni.loni.usc.edu>). As such, the investigators within the ADNI contributed to the design and implementation of ADNI and/or provided data but did not participate in analysis or writing of this report. A complete listing of ADNI investigators can be found at: http://adni.loni.usc.edu/wpcontent/uploads/how_to_apply/ADNI_Acknowledgement_List.pdf

*Correspondence to: Hyun Kim, PhD, T32 Post-doctoral Fellow, Department of Psychiatry, Columbia University Medical Center, 1051 Riverside Drive, Clinic 1501, New York, NY 10032, USA. Tel.: +1 646 774 7202; E-mail: hk3141@cumc.columbia.edu

AD biomarkers on faster atrophy rates in multiple brain regions, including the cortical and middle temporal volumes. *Post-hoc* analyses indicated that A β and p-Tau/A β predicted a faster decline in these regions/domains in IRSD, compared with biomarker-negative individuals with IRSD ($p \leq 0.001$). There was a significant IRSD*APOE4 interaction for brain atrophy rate ($p \leq 0.02$) but not for cognition.

Conclusion: IRSD may increase the future risk of AD by contributing to faster brain atrophy and cognitive decline when combined with the presence of AD biomarkers and APOE4. Early intervention for sleep disturbance could help reduce the risk of developing AD.

Keywords: All sleep disorders, Alzheimer's disease, cognitive aging, insomnia, volumetric MRI

INTRODUCTION

Alzheimer's disease (AD) affects 50 million people suffering from the disease globally and this number is expected to triple by 2050 [1]. It is increasingly important to understand the role of modifiable lifestyle factors that could be targeted for prevention or delay of AD, especially given that currently there is a lack of effective pharmacological treatment for AD [2].

Accumulating evidence suggests that sleep disturbance may be an important modifiable factor. Sleep contributes to brain health through tissue restoration and clearance of neurotoxins [3, 4]. Slow-wave activity (SWA) during non-rapid eye movement (NREM) sleep is particularly crucial for memory formation and consolidation [5, 6]. Furthermore, disruptions in the sleep-wake cycle have been associated with various pathways leading to AD, including accumulation of neurotoxins, such as amyloid- β (A β) and tau, as well as brain atrophy and cognitive impairment [7]. Sleep disturbance may be manifested as both short and long sleep duration, which could lead to pathologic brain aging and faster cognitive decline [8, 9]. However, the relationship between sleep and brain structure and functioning are complex, and little is known about how sleep disturbance could interact with AD biomarkers to result in adverse brain and cognitive outcomes.

Amyloid and tau deposition in the cortex and their reduction in the cerebrospinal fluid (CSF) are key AD biomarkers that contribute to the progression of other key markers for AD pathogenesis, such as neurodegeneration and cognitive decline [10, 11]. The potential role of AD biomarkers in sleep-related AD risk can be inferred based on their associations with both sleep and the brain. In animal and human clinical studies, sleep disturbance has been associated with A β and tau accumulation [3, 12–14]. Negative changes in sleep over time (shorter or excessive sleep

quantity) from mid- to later-life could also predict higher A β burden in late life [15]. Sleep and these AD biomarkers potentially have a bidirectional relationship, such that accumulation of A β and tau could also modify the impact of poor sleep on the brain [7, 16].

Another AD risk marker that contributes to AD development is apolipoprotein $\epsilon 4$ genotype (APOE4). Interestingly, sleep disturbance is more prevalent in APOE4 carriers compared with noncarriers [17], and recent studies demonstrated that APOE4 moderates the relationship between sleep and A β accumulation in cognitively normal older adults [18]. Conversely, sleep has been shown to modify the relationship between APOE4 and AD [19], suggesting that consolidated sleep may provide protection against biological mechanisms linking $\epsilon 4$ allele to neurodegenerative pathology. These findings indicate that there is an intricate mechanism linking APOE4 and sleep that leads to accelerated brain and cognitive changes associated with AD.

Taken together, the mechanisms of how A β , tau, and APOE4 contribute to AD risks appear to have a substantial overlap with how sleep disturbance impacts the brain. While previous studies have focused on AD biomarkers as a cause or a result of sleep disturbance [15, 16, 20, 21], no published studies examined how these AD biomarkers and genetic markers interact with disturbed sleep to impact long-term changes in the brain and cognition. Clarifying the roles of AD risk markers with large-scale datasets would be crucial for future practice of precision medicine for AD that considers one's genetic factors, A β /tau status, and lifestyle factors. The current study was designed to investigate the interplay between sleep disturbance and key AD biomarkers in a comprehensive dataset from the Alzheimer's Disease Neuroimaging Initiative (ADNI). We used reduced CSF A β_{42} as a marker of A β deposition, given its function as an early biomarker of amyloid plaque and

its associations with sleep disruption [7, 22]. CSF p-Tau/A β_{42} was used to determine tau burden given that this demonstrates the best performance for prediction of clinical decline in MCI populations, compared with t-Tau or p-Tau alone [23–25]. This p-Tau/A β measure reduces measurement error that could arise from individual differences in CSF production and is likely more sensitive in detecting tau-related neurodegeneration and cognitive decline [26, 27]. Here we aim to test two hypotheses: 1) sleep disturbance would predict faster 5-year progression of AD risk, as measured by rates of brain atrophy and cognitive decline; and 2) the presence of *APOE4* and A β – and tau deposition would accelerate brain and cognitive changes in the presence of sleep disturbance.

METHODS

Study sample

Analyses for the current study were conducted using data from the ADNI (<http://www.adni.loni.usc.edu>). ADNI was launched in 2003 as a public-private partnership and examines the progression of mild cognitive impairment (MCI) and AD through longitudinal assessments of MRI, PET, and other biomarkers, along with clinical and neuropsychological assessments.

A detailed description of the ADNI cohort has been previously published [28]. ADNI has recruited individuals with normal cognition (NC), MCI, and AD throughout its phases but only those with NC and MCI were considered for the present study. Qualifying MCI subjects had memory complaints, but no significant functional impairment, scored between 24 and 30 on the Mini-Mental State Examination (MMSE), had a global Clinical Dementia Rating (CDR) score of 0.5, a CDR memory score of 0.5 or greater and objective memory impairment on the Wechsler Memory Scale – Logical Memory II test [29]. Cognitively normal (CN) participants had MMSE scores between 24 and 30, a global CDR of 0 and did not meet criteria for MCI and AD. Inclusion and diagnostic criteria, as well as procedures and protocols, for the ADNI studies can be found on <http://www.adni-info.org/Scientists/ADNISTudyProcedures.html>.

For the current study, we included individuals with NC and MCI who had completed sleep measures [Neuropsychiatric Inventory (NPI)/Neuropsychiatric Inventory Questionnaire (NPIQ)], *APOE* genotype data, and CSF data (A β_{42} and p-Tau) at baseline and

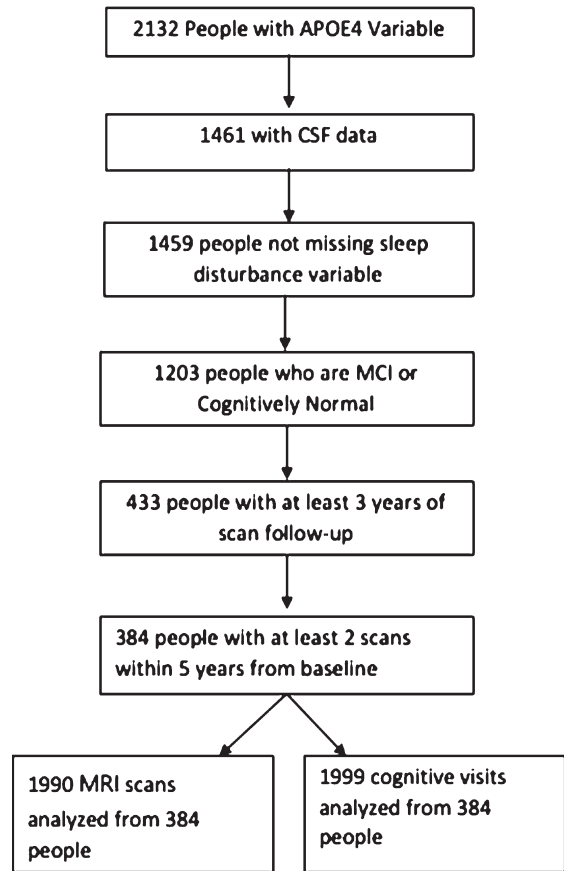


Fig. 1. Flowchart of the Participant Inclusion/Exclusion. Illustration of the inclusion/exclusion criteria for the final sample selection.

who had one or more follow up assessments three or more years after baseline assessments. Figure 1 describes how the final sample size was derived. The mean number of assessments was 5.2 with a standard deviation of 1.2. No data beyond that collected at five years post baseline was included. In the final sample of 384 participants, 197 (51.3%) were in the NC group and 187 individuals (48.7%) had MCI.

Standard protocol approvals, registrations, and patient consents

All procedures were approved by the Institutional Review Boards of all participating institutions. Written informed consent was obtained from every research participant according to the Declaration of Helsinki and the Belmont Report. For more up-to-date information, see <http://www.adni-info.org>.

175 *Neuropsychiatric inventory/neuropsychiatric*
176 *inventory questionnaire*

177 The presence of sleep disturbance was assessed
178 using the NPI and the NPI-Q. ADNI-1 used the NPI-
179 Q while ADNI-GO/2 used the NPI. Both versions
180 assess 12 neuropsychiatric symptoms, and the main
181 difference between them is that NPI is conducted as
182 a caregiver/informant interview whereas the NPI-Q
183 is conducted in a questionnaire format. Severity and
184 frequency ratings are highly correlated between NPI
185 and NPI-Q [30].

186 The 12 symptoms in the NPI/NPI-Q include
187 hallucinations, delusions, agitation/aggression, dys-
188 phoric/depression, anxiety, irritability, disinhibition,
189 euphoria, apathy, and aberrant motor behavior. The
190 informant is first asked to rate the presence of each
191 symptom within the past 1 month with “yes” or “no”,
192 then if the answer is “yes,” is asked to rate severity
193 (range 0–3). For the current study, informant-reported
194 sleep disturbance (IRSD) at baseline was determined
195 to be present if the study partner endorsed having
196 sleep disturbance (e.g., “Does the patient have dif-
197 ficulty sleeping? Is he/she up at night? Does he/she
198 wander at night, get dressed, or disturb your sleep?”).
199 It was coded as absent if not endorsed by the partner,
200 and individuals without IRSD were categorized as
201 Good Sleepers. Additionally, the total severity score
202 was calculated for both NPI and NPI-Q by summing
203 up the severity ratings for all domains except for sleep
204 and nighttime behaviors.

205 NPI or NPI-Q data from the baseline and all annual
206 visits were obtained from the Laboratory of Neu-
207 roimaging Image Data Archive (LONI IDA).

208 *CSF AD biomarkers*

209 CSF A β_{42} concentrations and p-Tau were mea-
210 sured in picograms per milliliter (pg/mL) by ADNI
211 researchers using the highly automated Roche Elec-
212 ssys immunoassays on the Cobas e601 automated sys-
213 tem following extensive validation studies [31, 32].
214 The CSF data used in this study were obtained from
215 the ADNI files ‘UPENNBIOMK9_04_19_17.csv’.
216 Detailed description of CSF acquisition (includ-
217 ing lumbar puncture procedures), measurement,
218 and quality control procedures were presented
219 in <http://adni.loni.usc.edu/methods/>. We determined
220 amyloid deposition using A β -positivity (“A β +”) which
221 was based on the cut-off value of 880 pg/ml [33].
222 CSF A β_{42} < 880 pg/ml was categorized as A β -
223 negative (“A β -”). CSF p-Tau/A β_{42} was examined

224 to assess the interaction between sleep and tau, given
225 that it is a robust biomarker for predicting clinical
226 decline and conversion to AD, more so than tau alone
227 [24]. CSF p-Tau/A β threshold was determined using
228 pre-established cutoff of 0.028 to determine “high”
229 versus “low” p-Tau/A β ratio [33].

Apolipoprotein E (APOE) genotyping

230 A detailed description of DNA extraction and pro-
231 cessing procedures in ADNI data have been published
232 previously [34]. For APOE genotyping, a 10 ml sam-
233 ple of peripheral blood was collected from each
234 subject, and restriction enzyme isoform genotyping
235 was performed on the extracted DNA to test for the
236 presence of the APOE $\epsilon 4$ genotype. APOE4 carriers
237 were defined as participants who had one or more
238 $\epsilon 4$ allele (“APOE4+”; $\epsilon 4/\epsilon 4$, $\epsilon 4/\epsilon 3$, $\epsilon 4/\epsilon 2$). Those
239 without any $\epsilon 4$ allele ($\epsilon 2/\epsilon 2$, $\epsilon 2/\epsilon 3$, $\epsilon 3/\epsilon 3$) were cat-
240 egorized as APOE4 non-carriers (“APOE4-”).
241

Neuroimaging data and analysis

242 All imaging measures were downloaded on August
243 18, 2020. For internal consistency, T1-weighted MR
244 images from 3T scanners were included for this
245 project. All T1 images went through an automated
246 quality control through MRIQC [35]. For the multiple
247 available T1 images at the same visit, we selected the
248 images with the best quality for further analysis. For
249 all images that passed quality check, cross-sectional
250 image processing was performed using FreeSurfer
251 Version 7.1.1 (<https://surfer.nmr.mgh.harvard.edu/>).
252 Region of interest (ROI)-specific cortical thick-
253 ness and volume measures were extracted from
254 the automated anatomical parcellation using the
255 Desikan-Killiany Atlas [36] and Aseg Atlas [37] for
256 cortical and subcortical ROIs. We also extracted the
257 total intracranial volume (TIV) and used it as a covari-
258 ate in the brain volumetric analyses.
259

260 For our focused interest on AD risk factors, we
261 pre-determined AD signature regions from exist-
262 ing literature [38, 39] and selectively examined
263 these areas as regions of interests. These regions
264 included lateral ventricles, middle temporal lobe, hip-
265 pocampus, posterior cingulate gyrus, temporal pole,
266 entorhinal cortex, perirhinal cortex, parahippocam-
267 pal gyrus, subcortical gray matter volume and cortex.
268 Volumetric measures were performed for all subcor-
269 tical regions and cortical regions including the middle
270 temporal lobe and the cortex.

Cognitive performance

We used ADNI's pre-generated cognitive composite scores that were constructed based on bi-factor confirmatory factor analyses models [40]. Composite scores were used to determine performance on various cognitive domains: memory ("ADNI-MEM", including the Rey Auditory Verbal Learning Test, AD Assessment Schedule-Cognition [ADAS-Cog], MMSE, and Logical Memory), executive function ("ADNI-EF", including Category Fluency-animals, Category Fluency-vegetables, Trails A and B, Digit span backwards, WAIS-R Digit Symbol Substitution, and 5 Clock Drawing items (circle, symbol, numbers, hands, time), language ("ADNI-LAN", including the Boston Naming Test, Category Fluency-animals and vegetables, and language components from the MMSE and ADAS-Cog, and the Montreal Cognitive Assessment), and visuospatial functions ("ADNI-VIS", including 5 Clock Drawing items-Copy and items related to visuoconstruction from the MMSE and ADAS-Cog).

Other covariates

All covariates, including demographic information and clinical diagnoses (hypertension, NC/MCI) were determined during routine ADNI visits. For the current analyses, baseline characteristics were used as covariates except for the TIV, which was a time varying covariate. Use of sleep medication was defined as benzodiazepine and non-benzodiazepine sedatives/hypnotics use for at least 1 month prior to and during the baseline visit. Time from baseline to MRI/neuropsychological performance was calculated in years.

Statistical analyses

All analyses were performed using the LME package for the R software (R Core Team, 2014, Vienna, Austria), and p -values < 0.05 were considered to indicate statistical significance. Residuals diagnoses were made at the end of modeling. To compare sample characteristics between the control group and individuals with sleep disturbance, we examined group differences in continuous variables with 2 sample independent T -tests and categorical variables with chi-square tests.

All models testing interactions were linear mixed effect models with random subject level intercepts and slopes. The mixed effect models are designed to

treat unbalanced data in longitudinal repeated measures design under the missing at random assumption [41]. To obtain the associations between IRSD and the rate of brain atrophy, we ran a model which had a time by sleep interaction along with a time and sleep term and we examined the coefficient for the time x sleep interaction term. Age, sex, education, hypertension, sleep medication (hypnotics/sedatives), time from baseline, and total NPI/NPI-Q severity scores were adjusted as covariates. Since we only focused on pre-specified regions of interests to confirm existing theories and find detectable patterns, we primarily focus on reporting the parameter estimates, their 95% confidence intervals and standardized effect sizes (Cohen's f^2) [42]. In addition to reporting p -values, we reported p -values after correcting multiple comparisons controlling false-discovery rate [43] by hypothesis.

The interaction terms between sleep disturbance, AD biomarkers ($A\beta$ and p-Tau/ $A\beta$ ratio) and *APOE4*, and brain volumes/thickness outcomes were also measured using a linear mixed effect model. We included the three-way interaction between sleep disturbance, biomarkers and time, lower order interactions between those variables and a term for sleep and time, and examined the coefficient for the three-way interaction. *Post-hoc* analyses were conducted in the event that there was a trend level p -value ($p \leq 0.10$) for the three-way interaction between sleep disturbance, AD biomarkers, and outcome measures. Correction for multiple comparisons was not conducted for *post-hoc* analyses, given that these were performed for the purpose of interpretation.

All codes used for statistical analyses are presented in the Supplementary Material.

Data availability

ADNI datasets are available to the research community upon request at <http://www.adni.loni.usc.edu>. The processed imaging data are available for the qualified investigators upon request at E-mail: seonjoo.lee@nyspi.columbia.edu.

RESULTS

Characteristics of the study sample

The mean age of the entire study sample ($N = 384$) was 72.00 (SD = 6.66) years, and 51.30% were females. IRSD was reported in 64 individuals (16.67% of the study sample). Comparisons of the

Table 1

Demographic characteristics of the study sample by Control and Sleep Disturbance groups

	Total (N= 384)
Age (mean \pm SD)	72.00 \pm 6.66
Sex (n, %)	
Male	187 (48.7%)
Female	197 (51.3%)
Education (y) (mean \pm SD)	16.36 \pm 2.58
Hypertension (n, %)	167 (43.5%)
NPI/NPI-Q Total (mean \pm SD)	0.98 \pm 1.76
Sedative/Hypnotic use (n, %)	42 (10.9%)
Total Intracranial Volume (mean \pm SD)	1452554.64 (\pm 179241.45)
A β positivity (n, %)	131 (34.1%)
High p-Tau/A β (n, %)	123 (32.0%)
Cognitive Status (n, %)	
Normal Cognition	197 (51.3%)
Mild Cognitive Impairment	187(48.7%)

SD, standard deviation; NPI, Neuropsychiatric Inventory; NPI-Q, NPI Questionnaire; A β , amyloid- β ; p-Tau, phosphorylated tau.

study sample by sleep disturbance groups indicated that there was a significantly greater proportion of MCI in the sleep disturbed group, compared to controls ($p=0.007$) (Table 1). Additionally, the IRSD group had significantly greater NPI-Q severity score ($ps \leq 0.03$). Other demographic characteristics, including age and education, were not significantly different across groups, and both groups had comparable use of sedative/hypnotic medication use.

Sleep disturbance and brain atrophy/cognitive change over time

All observed brain regions, except for the temporal pole, exhibited significant atrophy over the 5-year follow-up period, along with enlargement of the lateral ventricles (data not shown) ($ps < 0.05$). Reduction in the temporal pole volume was marginally significant across time ($p=0.07$). Baseline IRSD was not significantly associated with baseline brain volume differences, but baseline executive function (ADNI-EF) performance was significantly lower in the IRSD group ($\beta = -0.26, p = 0.01$). In longitudinal analyses, baseline IRSD was not significantly associated with the rate of atrophy in any of the observed regions after adjusting for age, sex, education, hypertension, use of sleep medication, time from baseline, and TIV (Supplementary Table 1).

Additionally, IRSD at baseline was marginally associated with changes in memory performance (ADNI-MEM, $\beta = -0.02, p = 0.05$) and language (ADNI-LAN, $\beta = -0.04, p = 0.08$) but not with changes in other cognitive domains.

The interaction between sleep disturbance and A β burden on brain/cognition

A total of 131 individuals (34.1%) were A β + at baseline. A β + proportions between IRSD and good sleepers were marginally different (45.3% and 31.9%, respectively, $p=0.054$). A β deposition at baseline predicted a faster atrophy rate in the hippocampus, entorhinal cortex, parahippocampal gyrus, middle temporal cortex, and the overall cortex, along with faster enlargement of the lateral ventricles ($ps \leq 0.02$). A β deposition was also associated with a steeper decline in all cognitive domains (ADNI-MEM, ADNI-EF, ADNI-LAN, and ADNI-VS, $ps \leq 0.004$).

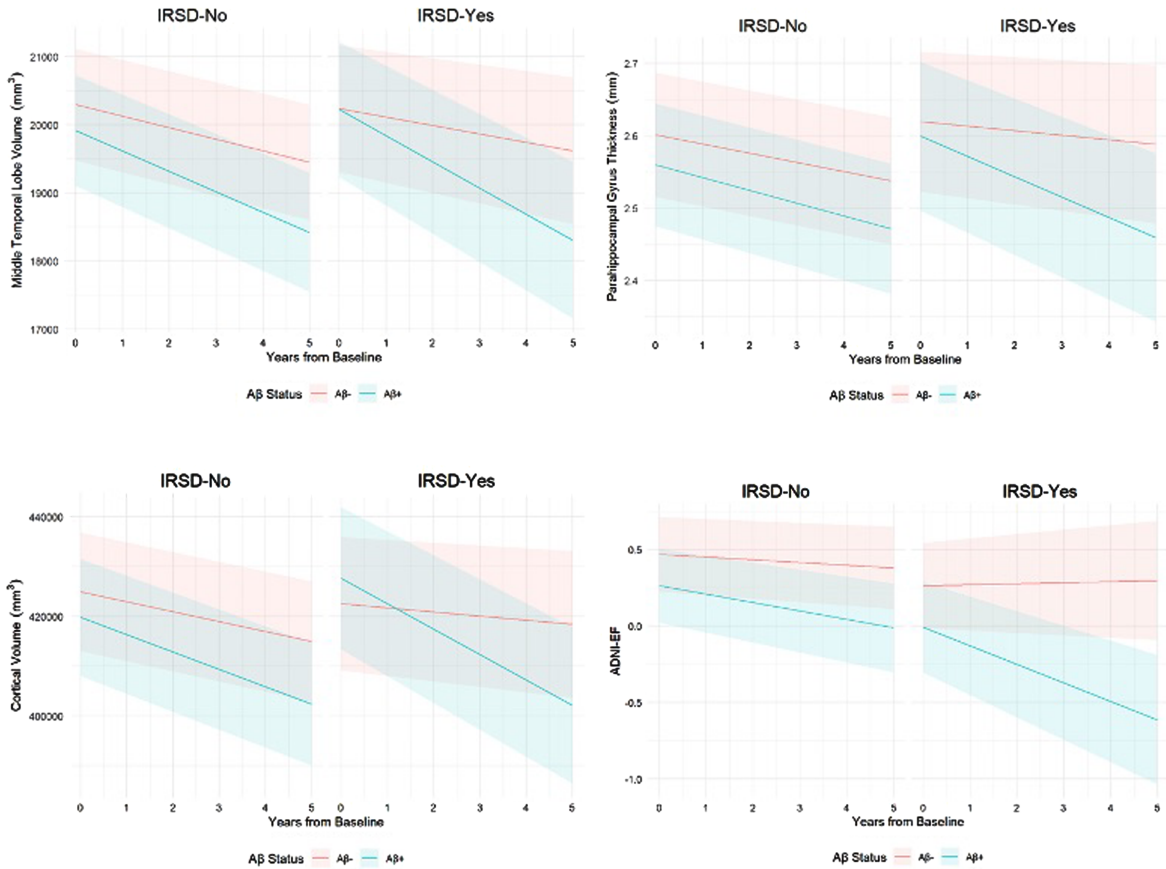
There was a significant interaction between sleep and A β burden on atrophy rate in the middle temporal cortex ($\beta = -0.01, p = 0.04$), parahippocampal gyrus ($\beta = -0.02, p = 0.04$), and the cortex ($\beta = -2749.22, p = 0.02$) (Supplementary Table 2). Further investigation on the effect of A β deposition on these regions indicated that being A β + was associated with a greater atrophy in all of these regions when sleep disturbance was present ($ps \leq 0.007$) (Fig. 2).

In analyses with cognitive outcomes, A β + status did not significantly interact with IRSD on any cognitive domains, but its interaction with IRSD was marginally significant in predicting a faster decline in attention/executive function decline (ADNI-EF, $\beta = -0.09, p = 0.07$) (Supplementary Table 2). *Post-hoc* analyses indicated that A β deposition was significantly associated with greater decline in these domains with the presence of IRSD, compared with the A β - group ($\beta = -0.13, p = 0.004$ for IRSD X A β + in ADNI-EF) (Fig. 2).

The interaction between sleep disturbance and p-Tau/A β ratio on brain/cognition

A total of 123 individuals (32.0%) had high p-Tau/A β values according to the pre-defined cutoff. There was no significant difference between IRSD and good sleepers on the proportion of high p-Tau/A β ($p=0.66$). High p-Tau/A β at baseline significantly predicted atrophy in all ROIs except for the temporal pole (which was marginally significant, $p=0.05$) and posterior cingulate cortex ($p=0.87$).

There was a significant interaction between IRSD and p-Tau/A β on the cortical volume ($\beta = 2271.67, p = 0.01$) (Supplementary Table 3). This interaction was marginally significant for the entorhinal cortex ($\beta = 55.17, p = 0.08$). Comparing IRSD and good



IRSD=Informant-reported sleep disturbance; ADNI-EF=Executive Functions domain

Fig. 2. Interactions between sleep disturbance and Aβ+ on cognitive changes. Amyloid deposition at baseline was associated with a greater atrophy in the cortex, parahippocampal gyrus, hippocampus, and middle temporal cortex when sleep disturbance was present ($ps \leq 0.007$).

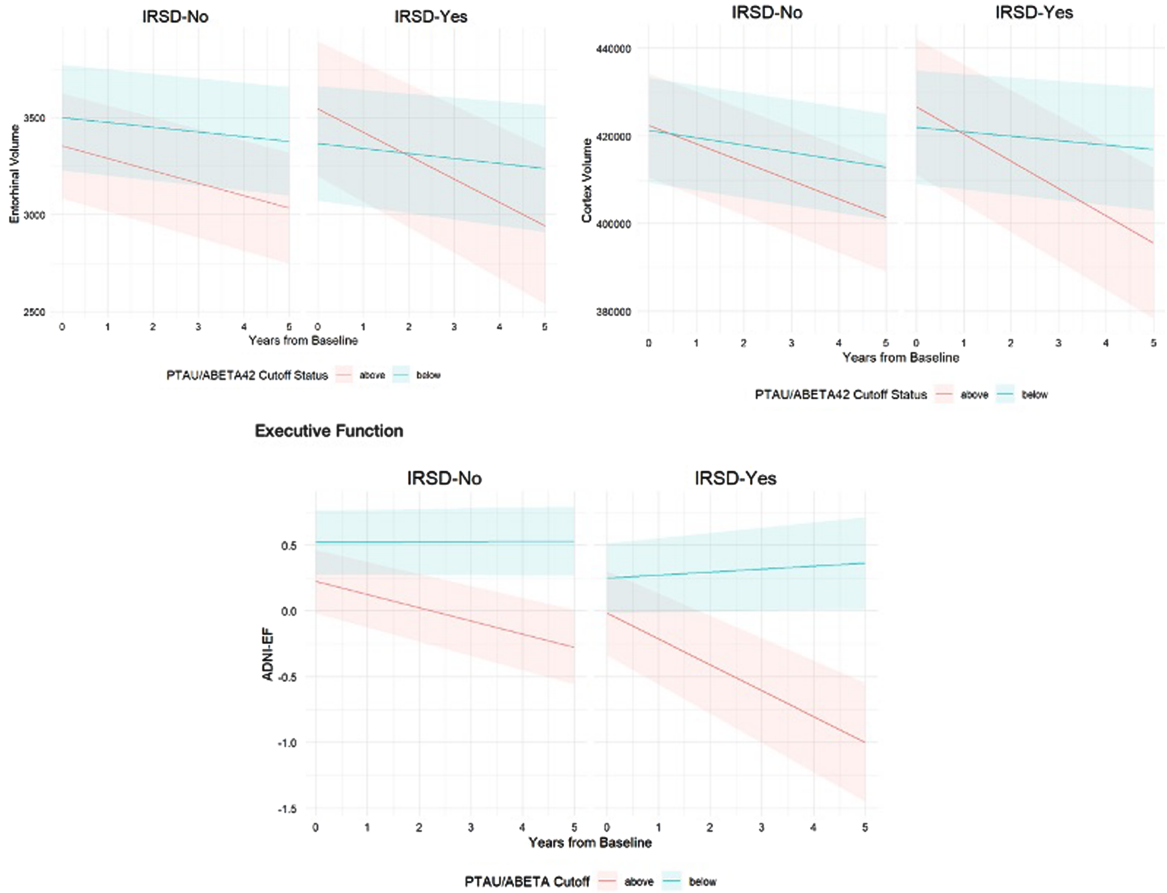
443 sleepers separately, we found that there was a significant
 444 difference by p-Tau/Aβ ratio in both brain
 445 regions ($ps \leq 0.004$), with high p-Tau/Aβ predicting
 446 greater atrophy in IRSD (Fig. 3). IRSD and p-Tau/Aβ
 447 also interacted significantly on attention/executive
 448 functions (ADNI EF $\beta = 0.12$, $p = 0.02$), but not on
 449 any other domains (Supplementary Table 3, Fig. 3).

450 *The interaction between sleep disturbance and*
 451 *APOE4 on brain/cognition*

452 The APOE4 allele was present in 117 good sleepers
 453 (36.6%) and 30 individuals with IRSD (46.9%).
 454 The effect of APOE4+ on brain atrophy was significant
 455 across most brain regions, including the hippocampus,
 456 middle temporal lobe, entorhinal cortex, parahippocampal
 457 gyrus, and the cortex, with positive status associated with
 458 more rapid atrophy

($ps \leq 0.046$) (data not shown). APOE4+ was also
 459 associated with faster declines in ADNI-EF, ADNI-
 460 MEM, and ADNI-LAN ($ps \leq 0.03$).

461
 462 The interaction between IRSD and APOE4+
 463 did not have a significant effect on brain atrophy
 464 ($ps \geq 0.10$) (Supplementary Table 4). Although the
 465 interactions between IRSD and APOE4+ were at
 466 the threshold for statistical significance on the mid-
 467 dle temporal and total cortical volumes ($ps = 0.10$
 468 for both), *post-hoc* analyses were performed to
 469 explore the potential APOE4 effect in IRSD. Results
 470 showed that, within the IRSD group, APOE4+ had
 471 a significantly steeper atrophy rate in both middle
 472 temporal ($\beta = -217.78$, $p = 0.002$) and the cortical
 473 volumes ($\beta = -2412.31$, $p = 0.02$), compared to
 474 APOE4- (Fig. 4). The three-way interactions between
 475 sleep disturbance, APOE, and cognition were not sig-
 nificant ($p \geq 0.49$) (Supplementary Table 4).



IRSD=Informant-reported sleep disturbance; ADNI-EF=Executive Functions domain

Fig. 3. Interactions between sleep disturbance and $A\beta^+$ on cognitive changes. Amyloid deposition at baseline was associated with a greater decline in executive functions (ADNI-EF) and memory (ADNI-MEM) with the presence of sleep disturbance, compared with the $A\beta^-$ group ($p \leq 0.0004$).

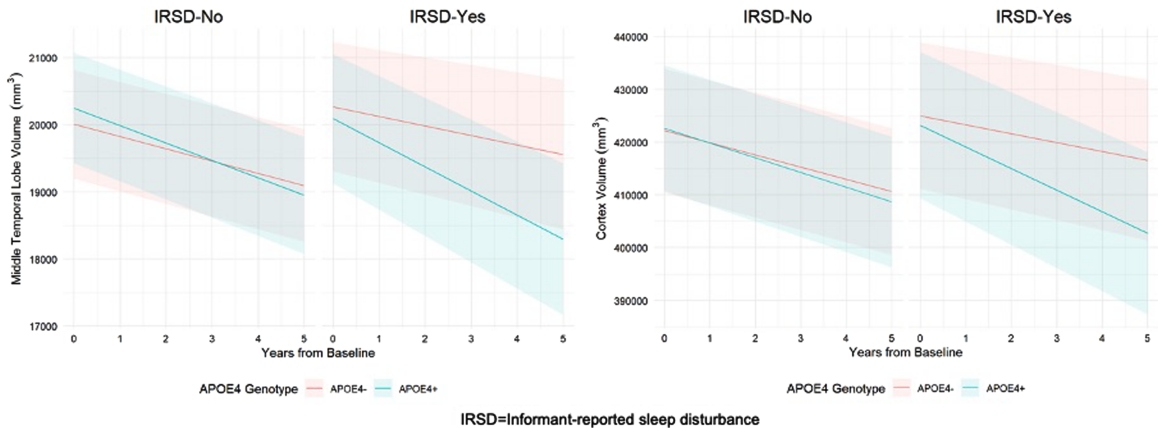


Fig. 4. Interactions between sleep disturbance and $APOE4$ on brain changes. Within individuals with sleep disturbance, $APOE4^+$ had a significantly steeper atrophy rate in both middle temporal ($\beta = 215.04$, $p = 0.005$) and the cortical volumes ($\beta = 2479.57$, $p = 0.02$), compared to $APOE4^-$.

DISCUSSION

The current study examined the effect of sleep disturbance on the rate of atrophy and cognitive changes after approximately 5 years of follow-up in a combined sample of cognitively healthy older adults and those with MCI. Although our results were not indicative of a significant association between informant-based sleep disturbance and greater brain atrophy or cognitive performance, further investigation with A β deposition, p-Tau/A β ratio indicated that these AD biomarkers interacted significantly with IRSD and led to accelerated changes in brain morphometry and cognition. *APOE4* also exhibited a significant interaction with IRSD and led to faster brain atrophy. While the brain regions impacted by the interaction of AD risk markers and IRSD differed slightly for each marker (e.g., the middle temporal volume with A β and the entorhinal cortex with p-Tau/A β interactions), global cortical atrophy stood out as a variable that was significantly impacted by all A β , tau, and *APOE* interactions. These findings provide evidence that AD risk markers may have significant roles in how sleep disturbance may impact cortical thinning as a whole, along with decline in cognitive performance. To the best of our knowledge, this is the first study to examine the interaction between sleep disturbance and key AD risk markers on longitudinal brain and cognitive changes. These results further suggest that good sleep may be protective even in the presence of A β or tau deposition and *APOE4* genotype.

The relationship between subjectively reported sleep disturbance and lower brain volume has been noted in healthy older adults [44–47] and older adults with MCI [48], and also longitudinally (i.e., sleep disturbance impacting increased cortical thinning rate) [9, 49, 50]. While the buildup of neurotoxic waste products and subsequent chronic inflammation are suggested as underlying mechanism, little is known about the role of A β and tau on sleep-related brain atrophy. Furthermore, brain regions impacted by sleep disturbance were inconsistent (frontal versus medial temporal regions) and neuroimaging findings were not transferrable to findings on cognitive functioning. Previous studies have produced inconsistent findings on how sleep impacts cognitive performance. Some studies [46, 51] found that individuals with sleep disturbance perform worse than controls on tasks measuring domains such as executive functioning, attention, and episodic memory while others have found null findings [52, 53].

Aside from heterogeneity in methodologies, we postulated that mechanisms underlying the sleep-brain and sleep-cognition relationships may be impacted by the contributions of biomarkers that are strongly associated with AD pathology. In that sense, understanding genetic or fluid biomarkers were critical for clarifying the complex associations between sleep and AD related outcomes.

The association of sleep disturbance with A β deposition is well established from animal studies [22] and in human younger adults and older adults in pre-clinical and clinical AD stages [15, 54]. One study by Molano and colleagues [55] found in their cross-sectional model that sleep efficiency and A β positivity significantly interacted to predict cognitive performance; however, these findings were circumscribed to A β , sleep, and cognitive performance. While A β -mediated tau progression could be the underlying mechanisms and tau is a stronger predictor of clinical symptoms of AD [4, 10], we further examined this topic using the p-Tau/A β ratio and found that high p-Tau/A β ratio also predicted faster progression of AD-like brain and cognitive changes. These findings indicate that the presence of A β and tau could modify sleep's impact on brain volume and cognitive functioning.

One possible mechanism underlying this phenomenon may be that sleep disturbance modifies the effects of A β and tau on the brain. Studies in cognitively normal older adults showed that sleep disturbance modulated the association between A β and cognition [56, 57], which may be linked with disruption in the NREM slow wave sleep. Disruption of the NREM could also increase A β accumulation [4], and cortical A β deposition has been associated with impairment in memory consolidation not directly, but through impairment in SWA [58]. Similarly, NREM slow-wave activity is known to have an inverse relationship with CSF tauopathy [59, 60]. This indicates that sleep disturbance may be associated with decreased SWA, leading to worse cognitive performance in those with amyloid and tau deposition. There is a need for large scale studies with in-depth sleep measures to fully disentangle these relationships.

Additionally, given that the relationship between sleep disturbance and AD biomarkers are bidirectional, it is also plausible that accumulation of A β and tau could negatively impact sleep and further advance pathologic brain aging [14, 59]. We cannot determine the direction of causality between AD biomarkers and IRSD from the current study design,

579 but we hypothesize that sleep disturbance could lead
580 to A β and tau accumulation, which in turn, could
581 negatively influence the sleep-wake cycle and dis-
582 rupt NREM slow-wave activity that is important for
583 cognitive functioning. Regardless of the sequential
584 order of the events, our data suggest that the combina-
585 tion of sleep disturbance and A β /tau could accelerate
586 AD-related brain and cognitive changes.

587 We also found a significant interaction between
588 IRSD and *APOE* genotype on brain and cognitive
589 changes. *APOE4* is believed to increase the risk of
590 AD by increasing cellular vulnerability to oxida-
591 tive damage, promoting the production of A β and
592 phosphorylated tau protein, as well as facilitating
593 neuroinflammatory processes [61]. Notably, recent
594 studies indicated that healthy sleep could moderate
595 the impact of *APOE4* on cognition and neuropathol-
596 ogy [19, 62]. Other studies have also supported the
597 moderating effect of *APOE4* on AD risk factors
598 (A β and cognitive impairment) in sleep disturbance,
599 which were defined as either actigraphy-based poor
600 sleep quality or apnea-induced oxygen desaturation
601 [63]. Our data demonstrated that individuals with
602 *APOE4* genotype are more prone to greater brain atro-
603 phy in the cortex globally and in the middle temporal
604 cortex when sleep disruption is apparent, though its
605 impact on cognitive performance was not detected.
606 Given that cognitive symptoms appear in the later
607 stages of AD pathology, the role of *APOE4* may be
608 clarified with a longer follow-up.

609 There is a significant overlap between the pres-
610 ence of *APOE4* and A β /tau deposition [61], but the
611 current data were not adequately powered to con-
612 duct the three-way interaction between sleep, *APOE*,
613 and AD biomarkers on neuroimaging/cognitive out-
614 comes. Therefore, our statistical models do not take
615 into account how the two biomarkers would inter-
616 act to impact the relationship between sleep and AD
617 pathology. There are also some methodological lim-
618 itations, particularly with using the NPI/NPI-Q, that
619 warrant careful interpretation of the study results.
620 First, the timeframe of study visits and neuropsy-
621 chiatric symptoms captured by the NPI/NPI-Q (i.e.,
622 the past month) may not adequately capture the
623 intermittent symptoms that could be present during
624 baseline and follow-up. This time frame also lim-
625 its the assessment of how long sleep disturbance
626 lasted from baseline. The use of NPI/NPI-Q also
627 makes it difficult to identify what specific aspect of
628 sleep disturbance (e.g., nighttime awakening, day-
629 time sleepiness, sleep-disordered breathing) may
630 forecast brain atrophy and cognitive decline. It is

631 also possible that sleep disturbance represented by
632 NPI/NPI-Q could indicate REM sleep disturbance
633 presented in Lewy body disease, which is not inves-
634 tigated thoroughly in the current study. Despite the
635 limitations of the NPI/NPI-Q, these measures have
636 been widely used in epidemiologic studies (ADNI
637 and NACC) due to their simple format and have rep-
638 resented sleep problems in large community-based
639 samples [52, 64]. ADNI's rigorous exclusion cri-
640 teria (i.e., depression, low education level), lack
641 of racially/ethnically diverse samples, and drop-out
642 rates also limit the generalization of our findings to a
643 broader older adult population.

644 Despite these limitations, the major strengths
645 of this study, including the use of comprehensive
646 datasets of ADNI and long-term follow-up duration,
647 allowed for a rigorous investigation of the relation-
648 ship between sleep, AD biomarkers, and AD-related
649 brain and cognitive changes, which is an understudied
650 area in sleep and aging research. While we acknowl-
651 edge that the causative relationship between sleep
652 disturbance and AD outcomes cannot be determined
653 with this study design, we hypothesize that sleep
654 is a modifiable risk factor for the development of
655 AD based on previous longitudinal studies examining
656 adverse sleep characteristics and incident dementia
657 with long term follow-up spanning midlife and later
658 life (10+ years) [65]. Reverse causation has been also
659 minimized through recent large-scale studies with
660 Mendelian randomization analyses, which indicated
661 causal effect of disturbed/short sleep on dementia
662 and common medical comorbidities associated with
663 dementia risk [66, 67]. Therefore, our findings sug-
664 gest that sleep may be a powerful intervention tool
665 for delaying or preventing the onset of AD, which
666 has been a consistent and firm message in many sleep
667 and aging research studies. The potential therapeutic
668 implications of sleep treatments for AD are becoming
669 especially important to consider given the failures of
670 anti-amyloid immunotherapy in cognitive disorders
671 [2]. It is notable that the effect sizes for our find-
672 ings are small (e.g., IRSD \times A β interaction explained
673 3% variance in the cortical atrophy). However, our
674 sample is adequately powered to answer our research
675 questions, and the heterogeneity and big proportion
676 of unexplained variance in brain morphometric and
677 cognitive changes are expected in multi-site, large-
678 scale datasets as those in ADNI. Future studies with
679 polysomnography and larger sample sizes that com-
680 prise a bigger MCI population may unveil potential
681 associations between sleep, AD biomarkers, and the
682 brain that are not observed in the current findings.

683 Longer follow-up duration spanning larger adult
684 lifespan may also allow for detection of long-term
685 effects of sleep on AD-related brain and cognitive
686 changes, potentially beginning as early as midlife.

687 Conclusion

688 In summary, findings from this study imply that
689 even a simple informant-based screening question
690 to determine sleep disturbance in the primary care
691 setting could imply the potential risk of accelerated
692 brain morphometric and cognitive changes related
693 to AD, particularly in the presence of A β deposition,
694 tau accumulation, and APOE4. Older adults who
695 report poor sleep and are at genetic/neuropathologic
696 risk may be able to slow the progression of AD
697 risks from targeted intervention approaches that
698 include systemic treatment and monitoring of sleep
699 symptoms.

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737

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739

740 SUPPLEMENTARY MATERIAL

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