Restless Legs Syndrome: A Comprehensive Review for Primary Care Physicians

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Abstract

Restless Legs Syndrome (RLS), also known as Willis-Ekbom disease, is a common chronic neurological sensorimotor disorder characterized by an overwhelming urge to move the legs, usually accompanied by unpleasant sensory symptoms. The disorder affects sleep quality, daytime functioning, mental health, and overall quality of life. RLS is frequently encountered in primary care yet remains significantly underdiagnosed and undertreated. Primary care physicians play an important role in the detection, evaluation, and management of RLS. This review provides an evidence-based overview of epidemiology, pathophysiology, diagnosis, differential diagnosis, and current management strategies relevant to primary care.

Keywords: Restless Legs Syndrome; Willis-Ekbom Disease; Primary Care; Iron Deficiency; Alpha-2-Delta Ligands; Dopamine Agonists; Augmentation