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A dream opportunity: Local sleep doctor wakes up the nation on 'Ricki Lake' and in Oprah's magazine

Patrick Whitehurst
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Sleep specialist Robert S. Rosenberg is well known in northern Arizona, and he'll soon be recognized on the national stage as well.

Rosenberg is featured in the March issue of O - The Oprah Magazine, in which he speaks on topics such as sleep hygiene and more. He will also appear on "The Ricki Lake Show" 2 p.m. Thursday, March 7, in a segment on sleep disorders, which will include topics such as sleepwalking, "sexsomnia" and more.

Sexsomnia, Rosenberg said, is one of many documented undesirable behaviors or activities coming from sleep or just as someone is coming out of sleep.

"In the case of sexsomnia, it's in the sleepwalking family," Rosenberg said. "People have been prosecuted for this, there have been rape cases, and some people have used it as a defense. It's much more common than people realize, and people are ashamed to talk about it. One of the reasons it's on the 'Ricki Lake Show,' and they were excited about it, is to let people know about it so they can bring it up with their doctors."

Two of Rosenberg's sexsomnia patients were flown to California to appear on the show with him.

"At first it was a little intimidating because you're going to be on national television," Rosenberg said. "Where it goes (from here) I really don't know. I'm not going to give up my day job, but it's been fun."

Rosenberg treats a number of sleep disorders, including insomnia, sleep apnea and more, from the Sleep Disorders Center in Prescott Valley. He operates sleep laboratories in both PV and Flagstaff.

The PV sleep lab has been in operation since 2004. Sleep Center Clinical Director Mari Hirst said the Prescott Valley sleep lab offers six beds for patients, and Flagstaff has four beds. "We have a really comfortable lab. Every room is individually temperature-controlled," Hirst said.

The centers treat both adults and children. "We treat kids who have sleep apnea, or (kids with) ADHD. Pediatricians will refer to us if they feel the ADHD is because of a sleep disorder, which we're discovering is very common," Rosenberg said. "Nearly 30 percent of the kids diagnosed with ADHD may have an underlying sleep disorder, which may be the cause."

Rosenberg writes a weekly column for The Daily Courier and has appeared on a number of national radio programs. He is currently writing a book about sleep.



Matt Hinshaw/The Daily Courier
Dr. Robert Rosenberg sits in one of his observation rooms Tuesday morning at his Sleep Disorders Center in Prescott Valley. Rosenberg will be on The Ricki Lake Show later this week.

"(The book) will be about behavioral issues with sleep," Rosenberg said. "The things we're dealing with are insomnia, PTSD and traumatic brain injury. About 30 to 40 percent of people with traumatic brain injury end up with sleep disorders for three or more years, (which can trigger) anxiety and depression. If you treat the sleep disorder, you can also get improvement in the (associated) problems."