

Vivid dreams and nightmares can occur in people who meet the International Consensus Criteria (ME-ICC) for Myalgic Encephalomyelitis, and they fit within the broader neurological and sleep dysfunction described in the criteria. Many patients report unusually intense dreaming, frequent awakenings, “wired but exhausted” sleep, nightmares, night sweats, or feeling as though they never enter restorative sleep.

Research in ME has found abnormalities involving the autonomic nervous system, brainstem function, sensory processing, and sleep architecture, which may contribute to disturbed REM sleep and heightened sensory activity during sleep.

Neuroinflammation, autonomic dysregulation, and abnormal stress-response signaling have also been proposed as possible mechanisms. Importantly, these symptoms are not simply “anxiety dreams” for many patients, but may reflect underlying neurological dysfunction associated with the illness itself.

Vivid dreams and nightmares are recognized as symptoms of Myalgic Encephalomyelitis (ME) under the 2011 International Consensus Criteria (ICC).

According to the ICC (2011), these fall under Section 3: Sleep Disturbance, which is a key component of the neurological impairment criteria.

#### ICC (2011) Classification

The ICC defines "Disturbed sleep patterns" as including:

- \* Insomnia (initial, middle, or late).
- \* Prolonged sleep (including naps or sleeping most of the day).
- \* Frequent awakenings.
- \* Vivid dreams/nightmares.
- \* Reversed or abnormal sleep-wake rhythms.

#### Context in ME

- \* **Neurological Impairment:** The ICC classifies these disturbances as part of the neurological dysfunction category.
- \* **Cause:** They are often attributed to fragmented sleep, where the brain is pulled into and out of REM sleep, or neuroinflammation affecting sleep-regulation centers.
- \* **Unrefreshed Sleep:** These dreams often contribute to the "unrefreshed sleep" symptom, where patients wake up feeling unrefreshed, exhausted, or in pain.

While vivid dreams are not universal for every patient, they are a documented symptom of the sleep dysregulation experienced in M.E..

#### References

More info on disturbed sleep patterns here:

[https://m.facebook.com/groups/347665639177551/permalink/1993869144557184/?](https://m.facebook.com/groups/347665639177551/permalink/1993869144557184/)

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