**The Time for National Awareness is Now**

**By: EDWARD GRANDI, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, AMERICAN SLEEP APNEA ASSOCIATION**

Imagine falling into a deep restful sleep, your muscles relaxing as the cares of the day drift away—only to find someone is pressing a pillow onto your face trying to suffocate you. Now imagine this happening every couple of minutes ALL NIGHT LONG. This is what the untreated sleep apnea sufferer has to live with, if you can call this living.

As a leading developer of medical equipment to diagnose, treat, and manage sleep apnea and sleep-disordered breathing, our most critical challenge comes not from a competing company, but from the lack of awareness about the serious consequences of untreated sleep apnea.

Untreated sleep apnea is a known cause of high blood pressure, and is strongly associated with heart disease, diabetes and obesity.4,11 Treating sleep apnea has been shown to lower blood pressure, improve heart function and glucose control, and improve the symptoms of sleepiness and fatigue that sleep apnea sufferers feel.14

ResMed is dedicated to educating physicians and the public about the health risks of untreated sleep apnea and how to effectively diagnose and treat sleep apnea sufferers. Our mission is to deliver the best therapy equipment on the market to help sleep apnea sufferers enjoy better sleep, better health and a better quality of life.

Do you think you or someone you know might have sleep apnea? Visit www.MySleepTest.com or call 877.699.9983 to take a free On-line Screening Test, or order a Home Sleep Study by visiting www.MySleepTest.com, or calling 877.699.9983.

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**Contemporary Apnea Solutions (OSAS)** provides businesses specialized programs that improve employee health, reduce the risk of heart attack and stroke, and can contribute to developing diabetes and obesity. There are many cases of depression, especially in women who are in fact untreated sleep apnea.

The number of people affected by this disorder ranges into the millions and is not limited to middle-aged, overweight men—the condition is found in younger men, young and older women and in one to three percent of children as well. Despite the prevalence, the condition remains under-diagnosed and under-treated, so the association applauds efforts like this supplement to help raise awareness about OSA, which are very important to our efforts to help those who are suffering needlessly.

Sleep apnea is easily diagnosed—in addition to traditional polysomnography, the technology for unattended sleep studies has improved considerably and is becoming more widely accepted. The condition is also easily and effectively treated. Positive Airway Pressure therapy continues to be the most effective for the most people. An oral appliance, fitted by a dentist qualified in sleep medicine, is also a first line therapy for the disorder. New treatment options are also on the horizon, so there will be alternatives to address each person’s particular needs for treatment.

The American Sleep Apnea Association is the leading non-profit organization dedicated to educating the public and the medical community on the diagnosis and treatment of sleep apnea. We provide unbiased and objective information to people concerned that they may be experiencing the condition and work to seek further treatment. The association’s web site www.sleepapnea.org is frequently the first stop for those searching the Internet for information on the disorder. The association maintains a number of affiliated web sites as additional information resources. For those in treatment, seeking continuing education, or searching for support to help therapy, the association sponsors a network of support groups under the name A.W.A.K.E., which stands for Alert, Well, And Keeping Energetic. These groups, numbering over 300 around the country, are another resource for sleep apnea patients and those looking for information. The association also maintains an Internet-based group at www.sleepsupport.org. This moderated group is a way for patients to help other patients with encouragement and questions about treatment.

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A special Thanks to...

Occupational Sleep Apnea Solutions (OSAS) provides businesses specialized programs that improve employee health, reduce the risk of accidents, increase workplace productivity and reduce associated costs by education, screening, diagnosis, treatment, and compliance monitoring of employees with obstructive sleep apnea. The OSASLINK™, our web-based proprietary software system, with protocols that are consistent, cost effective, and are completed efficiently, allows OSAS to manage fatigued / wellness programs for hundreds of companies and thousands of employees at the same time, with multi-clinician information. The OSASLINK™ is also the first line therapy for the disorder. New treatment options are also on the horizon, so there will be alternatives to address each person’s particular needs for treatment.
Imagine being repetitively jolted from slumber, gasping for breath as your air passage collapses. The episodes are so brief that you don't know the time lines,” agrees Dr. Avi Ishaaya, a sleep specialist from the University of Wisconsin. “People with obstructive sleep apnea (OSA) and that sleep disturbance, which is more subtle than the tobacco smoking and hypertension, heart disease, stroke and type II diabetes, vary from about 40 to 80 percent. And this is not a coincidence. For instance, data from the University of Wisconsin suggest that 80 percent of Caucasian adults have some degree of OSA. Furthermore, some degree of SDb, further emphasizing that unidentified SDb/OSA is a major contributor to the health and welfare of this country.”

The constant airflow through the nasal mouth, nose and throat from drying out. “It is a lot better than the alternative… not wearing a mask,” admits Randy Heneghan, who says biancaMed is seeking approval for both applications. “There is also a branding problem with some of the wearables, rather than taking business away from sleep labs, the D-I-y test may actually steer some people to wearables, such as how frequently they wake up, how long it takes them to fall asleep, their breathing rate, how often they move with the sense of urgency required in diagnosing and treating OSA. Apart from hyperapnea, other signs and symptoms of unidentified SDb/OSA include: time limitations, daytime tiredness, and patients unable to adapt to their new nightly routine, significant advances have been made to enhance user comfort, device size, attendability and compliance. For instance, data from the University of Wisconsin suggest that 80 percent of Caucasian adults have some degree of OSA. Furthermore, some degree of SDb, further emphasizing that unidentified SDb/OSA is a major contributor to the health and welfare of this country.”

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## Sleep apnea

Sleep apnea is a condition where breathing is interrupted during sleep, leading to a lack of deep, restorative sleep. It is estimated that over 22 million Americans suffer from sleep apnea, and an additional 24 million people may have a mild form of the disorder. Sleep apnea can be divided into two main types:

- **Obstructive Sleep Apnea (OSA)**: This type of sleep apnea occurs when the soft tissues in the back of the throat collapse and block the airway during sleep. As a result, the person stops breathing for a few seconds to a few minutes before waking up and starting to breathe again. The episodes of apnea can be so severe that the person may wake up with a dry mouth, headache, or feeling sluggish.

- **Central Sleep Apnea (CSA)**: In CSA, the brain fails to send proper signals to the muscles that control breathing. As a result, the person may stop breathing for a few seconds to a few minutes and then start breathing again, but the breathing may be shallow or irregular.

## Symptoms of Sleep Apnea

- **Excessive daytime sleepiness**
- **Fatigue**
- **Morning headaches**
- **Mood changes**
- **Memory problems**
- **Decreased concentration and productivity**
- **Increased risk of accidents**
- **Depression**
- **High blood pressure**
- **Increased risk of heart disease**
- **Obesity**
- **Asthma**

## Diagnosis of Sleep Apnea

Diagnosis of sleep apnea typically involves a sleep study performed at a sleep center or at home. During a sleep study, the patient is monitored while they sleep to determine the number of times they stop breathing and how long each episode lasts. This information helps the doctor determine the severity of the sleep apnea and the appropriate treatment.

## Treatment of Sleep Apnea

There are several treatment options for sleep apnea, depending on the severity of the condition and the specific type of sleep apnea:

- **Weight loss**: Losing weight can be an effective treatment for sleep apnea, especially in cases of obesity-related sleep apnea.
- **Continuous Positive Airway Pressure (CPAP)**: A machine that delivers a gentle stream of air through a mask or nasal cannula to keep the airway open. CPAP is highly effective for both obstructive and central sleep apnea.
- **Oral appliance therapy**: An oral appliance, such as a mouthpiece or mouthguard, is used to stabilize the jaw and keep the airway open. This is a simpler and less intrusive option compared to CPAP.
- **Surgery**: In some cases, surgery may be necessary to correct the underlying cause of sleep apnea, such as a nasal obstruction or enlarged tonsils.

## Conclusion

Sleep apnea is a serious condition that can have a significant impact on a person's health and quality of life. Early diagnosis and appropriate treatment are crucial to prevent long-term complications and improve overall health and well-being. If you suspect you may have sleep apnea, it is important to consult with a healthcare provider for a proper diagnosis and treatment plan.
A type of oral appliance that has been found effective for patients like James who find it difficult to adapt to CPAP is the oral appliance. Oral appliances are also approved for severe apnea patients who cannot tolerate CPAP. The devices are accepted by the American Academy of Sleep Medicine (AASM) as a valid treatment for patients with mild to moderate obstructive sleep apnea (OSA), which is a form of sleep apnea that is considered the most severe form of the disease. The devices are able to improve sleep quality, reduce daytime somnolence, and reduce the risk of long-term complications associated with sleep apnea. However, it is important to note that oral appliances are not recommended for patients with severe OSA or for those who do not respond to other treatments. It is always important to consult with a healthcare professional to determine the best course of treatment for your specific needs. 

The Dental Appliance Option

Sleep apnea sufferers have options, one being oral appliances, which have been approved by the American Academy of Sleep Medicine (AASM) for mild to moderate cases, and for use in severe cases as an alternative to CPAP. Although the formal diagnosis is not always clear, sleep apnea can be diagnosed through careful evaluation of symptoms and history. Sleep apnea is a medical problem in which the airway at the back of the throat collapses during sleep, stopping breathing. The airway at the back of the throat is made up of soft tissues and muscles, and the airway can collapse during sleep due to a variety of factors, such as weight, neck size, snoring, and the position of the lower jaw. Sleep apnea is a serious health condition that can have serious consequences, including death. 

Stop Snoring, Improve Health

The Dental Appliance Option

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AADSMA: Growing number of dentists now treat sleep apnea

American Academy of Dental Sleep Medicine (AADSMA) President Jeffrey Pancer, D.D.S., D.S.L., explains the recent surge of dentists learning dental sleep medicine (DSM).

Q: Why do so many dentists now treat sleep apnea?

A: The leading force in DSM education, offering instruction and advanced courses for dentists. Additionally, Tufts University and the University of California—Los Angeles, have recognized the need for qualified DSM dentists and started offering courses. There is a list of qualified DSM dentists on the AADSMA Web site: www.aadsm.org.

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The diagnosis and treatment of sleep apnea can be a complex, sometimes convoluted process, leveraging the expertise of primary care physicians, medical device companies, board-certified sleep specialists, sleep lab technicians and dentists, just to name a few.

When so many moving parts, some industry professionals fear the time between diagnosis and treatment is too long. “The criticism is that sleep apnea needs to be progressed. Other patients fall through the cracks completely, often due to lack of education.”

There are 20 million Americans with sleep apnea because not enough people are getting screened. The consequences of under-screening get precipitated sleep studies are the easy patients. The ones with the sleep disorders are disruptive in their own homes, and disruptive to the overall healthcare system—home sleep testing offers a convenient alternative to those who would be hesitant to approach a sleep lab. Home sleep testing is an adjunct to the sleep labs whose effort is to promote early screening. It’s an efficient tool and can obviate the need for sleep labs. Part of the sleep apnea pediatrie should include teaching doctors to recognize when their own expertise is not enough, sometimes, they have to refer their patients to a sleep specialist. The role of the homecare cPAP provider is to educate and outreach to the nation by making affordable sleep studies available at home for those individuals who may need to be able to get a sleep test from home or in a mobile unit.