

Snore Centre Patient eNewsletter

May 2011

This second edition of my newsletter for patients highlights some important information that all sleep apnoea sufferers should be aware of: the risk of surgical complications due to OSA.

The month of May saw National Stop Snoring Week: the annual awareness-raising initiative by the British Snoring and Sleep Apnoea Association. Also raising awareness of OSA this month, although not intentionally, was Ed Miliband. Apparently the Labour leader is a sufferer, and will undergo a septoplasty.

On the topic of famous sufferers helping to raise awareness, they don't come much more famous than American basketball star Shaquille O'Neal. «Shaq» and Harvard Medical School have produced a series of videos documenting his treatment. You can watch one on my [blog](#).

Michael Oko



Sleep Apnoea Sufferers at Higher Risk of Post-op Complications

Researchers at Thomas Jefferson University Hospital, Philadelphia, USA, have conducted a study into use of the STOP-BANG questionnaire for detecting sleep apnoea in patients about to undergo surgery.

The study, titled, "Obstructive sleep apnea syndrome and postoperative complications: clinical use of the STOP-BANG questionnaire", assessed the usefulness of the questionnaire to anesthetists in determining whether high risk scores on preoperative STOP-BANG (which is an acronym for: Snoring,

Tiredness during daytime, Observed apnea, high blood Pressure, Body mass index, Age, Neck circumference, Gender) questionnaires during preoperative evaluation correlated with a higher rate of complications of obstructive sleep apnea syndrome (OSAS).

The study of 135 patients (of whom 56 had high risk OSAS scores) concluded that, "The STOP-BANG questionnaire is useful for preoperative identification of patients at higher than normal risk for surgical complications, probably because it identifies patients with occult OSAS." They found that high risk OSAS patients

had a 19.6% chance of complications, compared with only 1.3% of the low risk group.

In my view this is big issue for both sleep apnoea sufferers and anesthetists. If the anesthetist is aware that a patient about to go in for elective surgery (such as a hip op) has a high chance of OSA then they can be prepared for problems, such as difficulty inserting a breathing tube due to a blocked airway. I would advise all people going for elective surgery to take this simple questionnaire themselves, and then tell the anesthetist if they get a high risk score of 3 or more. [Read more...](#)

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While it's surely beneficial that the leader of the Labour Party Ed Miliband being diagnosed with sleep apnoea will increase awareness of the condition in the UK, I hope that people don't get the impression that surgery is the best, or most common, solution. CPAP is the safest and most tried and tested solution to sleep apnoea and is recommended by NICE.

Surgery is not usually a first option for helping Obstructive Sleep Apnoea sufferers and in my practice only about 11% of all patients have surgery. However in some cases, especially children, the cause for Obstructive Sleep Apnoea might be enlarged tonsils or adenoids. Removing them, therefore, removes the problem. Mr Miliband does not seem to be in this category though as the Daily Telegraph reported last week:

"It had long been assumed that he merely had enlarged adenoids – fleshy parts behind the nose that can affect the voice... However on Friday a spokesman denied reports that he was having an adenoidectomy... [Read more...](#)

Nighttime symptoms

Loud persistent snoring

Witnessed pauses in breathing

Choking or gasping for air

Restless sleep

Frequent visits to the bathroom



Daytime symptoms

Early morning headaches

Daytime sleepiness

Poor concentration

Irritability

Falling asleep during routine activities

National Stop Snoring Week

The British Snoring and Sleep Apnoea Association's National Stop Snoring Week runs from 9-15 May.

This initiative aims to raise awareness of the issue of snoring and its impact on people's lives, and encourage sufferers to take action to stop snoring. The Association suggests performing the following tests: Nose Test, Mouth Breathing Test, Tongue Test, and a BMI Test. Instructions are here.

This year's theme for Stop Snoring Week focused on sleeping apart and whether it's a good thing for couples: "A survey in April this year of 1616 respondents commissioned by British Snoring & Sleep Apnoea Association found that snoring is causing damage to relationships across the UK; 75% of UK couples are spending nights

The Snore Centre treated over 400 patients in the past year

96% were very satisfied with the service they received

in separate rooms, causing embarrassment and distance between partners. 61% of them even think their sleeping arrangements are socially unacceptable, so wouldn't talk about them openly.

«Whilst a small proportion of couples were happy to sleep in separate rooms more than 80% said that they would sleep together in the marital bed if their snoring issues were resolved.

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