

Snore Centre Patient eNewsletter

October 2011

Britain Faces Tidal Wave of Sleep Disorders

The BBC reported in October that the NHS is struggling with a “tidal wave” of sleep disorders related to obesity, according to specialists. They report that the number of people being referred for sleep problems in Scotland has risen 25% over the past three years, with about 80% of patients being overweight.

Figures for the rest of the UK are not available but doctors at sleep clinics in Scotland say their experience is probably mirrored elsewhere. The DVLA estimates 20% of serious incidents on major roads are caused by sleepy drivers.

Dr Tom Mackay, an expert in sleep disorders, at the Royal Infirmary of Edinburgh says he is facing a “tidal wave” of cases. There are now more new cases of sleep apnoea being diagnosed than lung cancer and emphysema combined.

Dr Mackay said: “Over the past five to 10 years we have noticed quite a rise in the number of people being referred to us. That rise seems to be accelerating. We are now seeing 2,500 new patients each year. We are reaching capacity in terms of what we can cope with, and there is an undoubted link with people’s weight. For a man, if you’ve got a



collar size of more than about 17.5in (44cm) then that is a marker for too much flesh around your neck. That roughly equates to a waist size of about 36in.”

The DVLA does not usually remove the driving licence of patients who are undergoing treatment. Take the sleep apnoea test [here](#).

SIGN THE PETITION

Tired drivers cause violent deaths & horrific injuries

Responsible department: Department for Transport

I would like a debate to raise awareness for the early diagnosis of HGV drivers with sleep apnoea. Last year my son and his fiancée were crashed into by a driver who had undiagnosed sleep apnoea. My son was left with serious brain injuries and his fiancée was killed. The driver was charged with death by dangerous driving but days before the trial the case was dropped by the CPS as he was driving unaware of this medical condition. There are clear criteria and indicators as to who is likely to suffer this condition. Please help raise awareness with haulage employers and GP’s. So that no other person is killed by a condition that is treatable.

To sign the petition, which needs 100,000 signatures to be considered by the government, go to epetitions.direct.gov.uk/petitions/5851

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Mediterranean Diet May Help Treat Sleep Apnoea



A new study published in the European Respiratory Journal has found that a Mediterranean diet coupled with increased exercise and continuous positive airway pressure (CPAP) therapy may help to treat sleep apnoea.

The researchers, from the University of Crete in Greece examined 40 obese patients suffering from OSAS. Twenty patients were given a prudent diet to follow, while the other 20 followed a Mediterranean diet. Both groups were also encouraged to increase their physical activity, mainly involving walking for at least 30 minutes each day.

In both groups, the patients also received CPAP therapy, which involves wearing a mask that

generates an air stream, keeping the upper airway open during sleep.

The results showed that people following the Mediterranean diet had a reduced number of disturbances, known as apnoeas, during the rapid eye movement (REM) stage of sleep, which usually accounts for approximately 25percent of total sleep during the night. The findings also revealed that people following the Mediterranean diet also showed a greater adherence to the calorie restricted diet, an increase in physical activity and a greater decrease in abdominal fat.

The researchers suggested that further studies in a larger sample are required to fully understand the benefits of this diet.

Hidden costs of Not Treating Sleep Apnoea

The dramatic rise in the number of people suffering from conditions such as obstructive sleep apnoea (OSA) in the past 10 years has put severe strain on the NHS. A further hidden cost is the fatal risk to drivers of this condition.

Employing the emergency services to a fatal road accident on a motorway costs taxpayers about £250,000 – enough to run an OSA service for a year – and the risk of accidents is increasing as the population gets more obese.

We think about 80% of people who suffer from OSA are still undiagnosed and even the 10% to 20% who get diagnosed take about eight to 10 years from onset of symptoms to eventual treatment. Because it is a gradual condition people don't necessarily realise why they are feeling like they do and blame age.

**The Snore Centre
treated over 400 pa-
tients in the past year**

**96% were very
satisfied with the
service they received**

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