

## Sleep Apnoea and Pregnancy

It is possible that pregnant women can develop sleep apnoea during pregnancy. In studies of non-pregnant populations, a 20 % weight gain has a very significant impact on the development of OSA. Since pregnant women often have similar weight gains it is theoretically possible that many will develop breathing problems that can affect the developing fetus.

Snoring is the lowest level of sleep disordered breathing. Only 4% of healthy young women snore; the fact that reports of snoring increase to 25% of pregnant women by the third trimester, points to other possible negative side-effects of compromised breathing. The more overweight a woman is before she gets pregnant, the more likely there will be alterations in her breathing at night. Studies of pregnant women show that snorers have higher blood pressure than non-snorers.

Sleep apnoea is known to increase blood pressure in patients, in the beginning this is seen only



during sleep and could be missed at a medical appointment. There is a pregnancy-induced hypertension that can develop after the 20th week of pregnancy and can cause many problems with the developing baby and the mother's health. When this gets out of control, it is called preeclampsia or, worse yet, eclampsia and can be fatal. Known risk factors for preeclampsia include family history, advancing maternal age,

obesity, chronic hypertension and kidney disease. As of now, no one knows if sleep apnoea, and the intermittent lack of oxygen it causes at night, causes the blood vessel breakdown in the placenta seen with preeclampsia or if the retention of fluid from the preeclampsia causes the breathing problems due to tissue swelling all over the mother's body. Obstetricians are always on the lookout for this condition and will treat it aggressively.

## New Harley Street Clinic Now Open!

**Michael Oko has established a Sleeping Disorders Centre clinic at London's most respected medical address to cater for private patients in need of diagnosis and treatment for sleep apnoea and other sleep disorders**

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### CPAP Therapy Helps Relieve Depression

Patients seen at the Cleveland Clinic Sleep Disorders Center who used positive airway pressure (PAP) to treat their obstructive sleep apnea (OSA) had improvements in their depressive symptoms, even if they followed the prescribed PAP regimen only partly, a new study reports.

The study looked at 779 patients with OSA and asked them to fill out a standardized PHQ-9 form to assess depressive symptoms, which patients with OSA often have, researchers said. They were assessed again with the PHQ-9 following PAP treatment, and all

showed improvement in PHQ-9 scores; however, patients using their PAP devices more than four hours per night had greater score improvements than those who were less adherent. Other factors that affected the improvements in PHQ-9 scores were whether the patient was sleepy and marital status.

“The score improvements remained significant even after taking into account whether a patient had a prior diagnosis of depression or was taking an anti-depressant,” said Charles Bae, MD, principal investigator in the study.

### CPAP Improves Sexual Function in Men

Men who suffer from obstructive sleep apnea (OSA) are seeing another potential benefit from continuous positive airway pressure therapy, or CPAP: improved sexual function and satisfaction in non-diabetic men under age 60.

A study out of Walter Reed National Military Medical Center in Bethesda, Md., assessed the erectile function and libido of 92 men who were newly diagnosed with OSA and starting CPAP therapy. Erectile dysfunction (ED) is common in OSA patients, and nearly half of the men in the Walter Reed study reported the presence of ED. Patients were assessed again after one, three and six months of CPAP therapy.

The results show that CPAP improved the sexual function and satisfaction in the majority of men in the study regardless of their level of erectile function reported at the very start. Those with ED had more robust improvements and even many without ED reported improved sexual function and satisfaction.

“We were surprised at how prevalent ED is in a relatively young population of men with sleep apnea. The average age was 45,” said Joseph Dombrowsky, MD, the study’s primary investigator. “But we were similarly surprised at how robust a clinically significant response the men had with CPAP therapy.”

