

Snore Centre Patient Saved From Sleep Apnoea by Her Parrot

One of my patients has been all over the news this month with her amazing story about how her parrot alerted her to the fact she was suffering from sleep apnoea. The story has received incredible coverage from media across the world. It all started with an article in the Daily Mail Online.

Barbara told the [MailOnline](#): 'I wondered why he kept sitting on my shoulder and pecking at me. At first I was quite annoyed - he kept waking me up and I found it embarrassing as he would also mimic my snoring. But he must have realised something was wrong and was trying to keep me awake. He has kept me alive. He really is one in a million.'

Barbara was diagnosed with sleep apnoea in 2009 after suffering from nocturnal incontinence. 'I was getting up three to four times a night having wet myself. I thought that I had something wrong with my bladder and at first doctors were looking at Botox, but then one American doctor said it could be sleep apnoea, which I had never heard of before,' she said.

A visit to an overnight clinic confirmed that Barbara did have the condition. This also explained why the former canteen-worker had suffered with extreme tiredness for so long. She had found herself drifting off even when she was standing up and often even pitched head first into the coffee table. As a result she had broken her nose five times along with suffering a fractured shoulder and other bumps and bruises. Barbara is now successfully undergoing Continuous Positive Airway Pres-



sure therapy, which provides a gentle flow of air pressure through her nose using a mask. The air pressure prevents airway collapse, allowing her to breathe freely during sleep.

'For the first time in a long time, I feel like I can see light at the end of the tunnel, and have got some of my mobility back after years of feeling too tired to get off the couch,' she said. She now finds she doesn't nod off so often during the day, which means Dominic can

take a step back from guard duty. 'I'm grateful to Dominic for keeping an eye on me, but I certainly won't miss the painful alarm calls or his mocking my snoring,' she said.

Sleep apnoea has traditionally been viewed as a male disease, but a recent study has suggested that among women aged 20-44, up to one quarter now suffer from it, a figure which rises to more than half in women aged between 45 and 54, and 75 per cent in women aged between 55 and 70.

Merry Christmas
and Happy New Year



New Finnish Study Finds 10% of 6-8 Year Olds Suffer From Sleep Disordered Breathing

Sleep-disordered breathing — which includes snoring and sleep apnea — isn't just an adult condition: A new study from Finland shows that as many as one in 10 six-to-eight-year-olds may also have it.

The study, which was conducted by researchers from the University of Eastern Finland, included 512 kids from Finland between ages six and eight. The researchers examined their sleep disturbance status, as well as how their top and bottom rows of teeth fit together and their face shape (craniofacial morphology). Researchers found that being overweight and obese wasn't linked with sleep-disordered breathing in kids, as it may be with older adults. Rather, craniofacial or dental issues seemed to be at play, according to the European Journal of Pediatrics study.

"If a child has symptoms of sleep-disordered breathing, his or her craniofacial status and dental occlusion need to be examined," study researcher Tiina Ikävalko,

an orthodontic specialist and a clinical lecturer at the university, said in a statement. "On the other hand, children with tonsillar hypertrophy, crossbite and convex facial profile should be examined to assess the quality of their sleep."

The prevalence of sleep-disordered breathing in kids found in this study is not too different from that previously reported by the American Academy of Otolaryngology-Head and Neck Surgery, which said that snoring is commonplace in about 10 percent of all kids, and obstructive sleep apnea is prevalent in about 2 to 4 percent of kids.

Potential health risks from sleep-disordered breathing in kids include attention problems, bedwetting, increase in insulin resistance, increase in blood pressure, and even a decrease in growth hormone, the American Academy of Otolaryngology-Head and Neck Surgery reported.

[Read more on the blog](#)

Sleep Apnoea Has a Different Effect on Women's Brains Than Men's

The latest edition of Sleep journal contains research which shows that sleep apnea affects women and men differently because of sex-specific changes in the brain.

This is the finding of researchers at the University of California at Los Angeles (UCLA)'s School of Nursing, School of Medicine, and Brain Research Institute.

The 80 subjects in the study included men and women with newly diagnosed, untreated obstructive sleep apnea (OSA) and healthy controls.

In all the groups, brain fiber integrity was assessed with fractional anisotropy (FA), a diffusion tensor imaging-derived measure. Sleep quality, daytime sleepiness, depression, and anxiety were assessed with questionnaires. The researchers identified regions of differing injury in male vs female OSA patients by assessing brain regions with significant interaction effects of OSA and sex on FA.

The data showed areas of sex-specific, OSA-related FA reductions in women relative to men, including in the bilateral cingulum bundle adjacent to the mid hippocampus, right stria terminalis near the amygdala, prefrontal and posterior-parietal white matter, corpus callosum, and left superior cerebellar peduncle.

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and Happy New Year