



Media Release

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Australia's Inaugural Sleep Apnea Awareness Day to take place 5th May 2019

Sleep Disorders Australia is excited to announce Australia's first ever Sleep Apnea Awareness Day (SAAD).

Obstructive sleep apnea (OSA) is one of the most common sleep disorders diagnosed in Australia. 25% of men and 9% of women have OSA however after menopause women are just as likely to have OSA as men. OSA occurs when a person's airway repetitively collapses during sleep, meaning that they physically are not able to take air into their lungs due to an obstruction in the upper part of the airway. This disrupts the brain's restful nights sleep as it has to constantly work to open up the airway. The brain 'wakes up' but the person may feel they are still asleep. These pauses in breathing also mean that the body does not receive the oxygen it needs to function properly, which can result in an array of other health problems.

Classic signs and symptoms of OSA include:

- Excessive daytime sleepiness
- Loud snoring
- Snorting and gasping at night
- Dry mouth and morning headaches
- Poor concentration and attention
- Memory problems
- Irritability

Due to the stress that OSA places on the body it has been found to be associated with a number of other serious medical conditions. If OSA is left untreated, it can result in hypertension, depression, vascular disease, congestive heart failure, heart attack, type 2 diabetes, stroke, and even premature death. It is also associated with a higher incidence of motor vehicle and industrial accidents.

A common misconception is that OSA only affects older, overweight men, but this is not the case. Anyone can have OSA regardless of gender, age or body type.

Children can also have OSA. Risk factors for children include enlarged adenoids and tonsils, allergies, asthma, obesity and facial differences such as a small jaw or large tongue. Signs of sleep apnea can also be different to those in adults. Sometimes a child's symptoms can present as ADHD (Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder) such as hyperactivity, aggressiveness, learning difficulties and poor concentration. Bed wetting, less growth potential, poor sleep and difficulty waking in the morning are also associated with sleep apnea in children.

Some facts:

- OSA is common. 25% of men and 9% of women have OSA however after menopause women are just as likely to have OSA as men.
- Only 15% of people with moderate to severe sleep apnea are currently recognised or treated.
- People who are overweight (BMI over 25), have a large neck size (>43 cm for men, > 40 cm inches for women), are over 40 years old for men, or over 50 for women, have a family history of sleep apnea, are a smoker, or have high blood pressure are at an increased risk of having sleep apnea.
- Moderate to severe OSA carries a significantly increased risk of premature death from cardiovascular disease (33% mortality at 15 years).
- People with untreated OSA are between two to five times more likely to have a motor vehicle accident than someone without OSA.
- Cigarette smoking can worsen sleep apnea in adults. Passive cigarette smoking can increase a child's sleep apnea severity by 20%.
- Up to 27% of children snore. This is not normal and means there is a blockage in the child's airway that should be investigated.
- People with OSA have a high rate of co-morbid illnesses:
 - 40-50% have hypertension.
 - 34% have coronary heart disease.
 - 34% have congestive heart failure.
 - 65% have diabetes.
 - 50% have kidney disease.
 - 80% have fibromyalgia
 - 84% have nocturnal strokes.
- Treatment can significantly improve quality of life.

It is our goal to raise awareness of all aspects of sleep apnea, including how it impacts a sufferer's life by sharing stories of people living with sleep apnea. We also aim to dispel the myths associated with sleep apnea. It is estimated that as many as 26% of adults aged 30-70 years have obstructive sleep apnea. Contrary to popular belief, sleep apnea patients come in all shapes and sizes, not all sleep apnea sufferers snore, many are not obese or even overweight, and not all of them are male.

The first annual Australian Sleep Apnea Awareness Day will be held on Sunday 5th May 2019. Please join us and help raise awareness of this potentially life-threatening sleep disorder.

About Sleep Disorders Australia

Sleep Disorders Australia is Australia's only Not for Profit organisation that represents people with all sleep disorders. We provide support and information and we also advocate and raise awareness of sleep disorders and the significance they can have on the lives of those affected by them.

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SLEEP APNEA AWARENESS DAY

by Sleep Disorders Australia



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