



Editorial

Short Communication on Obstructive Sleep Apnea

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Abstract

Obstructive sleep apnea is a severe sleep disorder. It causes breathing to stop and start repeatedly while you sleep. With sleep apnea, the muscles in your upper airway relax while you're sleeping. This causes your airways to become blocked off, keeping you from getting enough air. This may cause your breathing to pause for 10 seconds or longer until your reflexes initiate breathing to restart. You're considered to have severe sleep apnea if your breathing stops and restarts more than 30 times an hour. The apnea-hypopnea index (AHI) measures obstructive sleep apnea to determine a range from mild to severe, based on the number of breathing pauses per hour you have while sleeping.

Keywords:

Sleep apnea, Apnea-hypopnea index.

Symptoms of severe sleep apnea

Your bed partner may notice some symptoms of obstructive sleep apnea before you're aware of them, including:

- Loud snoring
- Episodes of stopped breathing during sleep
- Abrupt awakenings from sleep, often accompanied by choking or gasping
- Decreased libido
- Mood changes or irritability
- Nighttime sweating

Symptoms that you might notice:

- Daytime sleepiness
- Difficulty with concentration and memory
- Dry mouth or sore throat
- Morning headaches

According to the American Sleep Apnea Association (ASAA), sleep apnea can have long-term effects on your health. Sleep apnea

left untreated or undiagnosed can have serious consequences, such as:

- Heart disease
- High blood pressure
- Stroke
- Depression
- Diabetes

There are secondary effects as well, such as automobile accidents caused by falling asleep at the wheel.

Does sleep apnea qualify as a disability?

According to the Nolo legal network, the Social Security Administration (SSA) does not have a disability listing for sleep apnea. It does, however, have listings for breathing disorders, heart problems, and mental deficits that might be attributed to sleep apnea.

If you do not qualify for the conditions listed, you may still be able to receive benefits through a Residual Functional Capacity (RFC) form. Both your doctor and a claims examiner from Disability Determination Services will fill out an RFC form to determine whether you are able to work due to:

- Your sleep apnea
- The symptoms of your sleep apnea
- The effects of those symptoms on your day-to-day life.

Risk factors for sleep apnea

You are at a higher risk for obstructive sleep apnea if:

- You have overweight or obesity. Although anyone can have sleep apnea, obesity is considered by the American Lung Association (ALA) to be the most important risk factor. According to Johns Hopkins Medicine, sleep apnea affects over 20 percent of people with obesity compared to about 3 percent of people of moderate weight. According to the Mayo Clinic, obstructive sleep apnea can also be caused by conditions associated with obesity, such as polycystic ovary syndrome and hypothyroidism.

- You are male. According to the ALA, men are 2 to 3 times more likely to have obstructive sleep apnea than premenopausal women.

The risk is about the same for men and postmenopausal women.

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