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Board Certified Sleep Medicine Specialist

- **Chief Medical Officer of Sanusom seeking to improve positive airway pressure therapy (PAP) adherence and support**
- **Medical Director of Sleep at Thirty Madison**
- **Expert Advisory Board member for Project Sleep focused on patient advocacy and education**
- **Served on the California Sleep Society Board of Directors**
- **On the American Academy of Sleep Medicine task force for REM Behavior Disorder Guidelines**
- **Served as Assistant Professor at the University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA)**

Obstructive Sleep Apnea Increase The Risk Of Heart Disease

Snoring, often considered harmless or merely disruptive, is actually an audible vibration of tissues in the upper airway, occurring when airflow is restricted during sleep. However, it serves as a sign that breathing may be compromised during sleep, potentially indicating a more serious underlying issue. Snoring has been linked to various health concerns, including cardiovascular disease, and is associated with an increased risk of fragmented sleep, daytime tiredness, hypertension, atherosclerosis, coronary artery disease, dyslipidemia, Type 2 Diabetes, and accidents.

What is Obstructive Sleep Apnea (OSA)?

Obstructive Sleep Apnea (OSA) occurs when the relaxation of the upper airway muscles is so significant that it completely blocks breathing during sleep. These episodes often result in drops in oxygen levels, increased stress on the body, putting the body into a constant "fight or flight" state, increased inflammation, blood vessel dysfunction, metabolic dysregulation, and disturbed sleep.

Link Between Snoring and OSA

According to the Sleep Heart Health Study (SHHS) involving 5615 participants between 40 and 98 years old, **61% of habitual snorers had obstructive sleep apnea (OSA). Consistent loud snoring increased the chances of having moderate to severe obstructive sleep apnea by 3-4 times (1)**. Meta-regression analysis indicated that **70-90% of people with OSA snore (2).**

It is very important to differentiate between simple snoring and obstructive sleep apnea (OSA) by looking for dangerous symptoms. Consistent or very loud snoring, gasping or choking during sleep, and pauses in breathing are potential signs of OSA. Other indicators include waking up at night, feeling unrefreshed in the morning, daytime fatigue, and blood pressure issues, especially if it's hard to control with medication. A family history of heart disease combined with snoring might also suggest OSA. If you have these symptoms, it's advisable to see a medical provider for evaluation.

There are many ways to help address snoring. First, maintaining a healthy lifestyle is essential. This includes limiting the intake of alcohol to prevent further relaxation of the muscles during sleep and avoiding smoking. Regular exercise is important as it helps to reduce adipose tissue in the upper airway and move fluid around the upper airway, ensuring better sleep. Additionally, avoiding sleeping on your back (supine position) and instead sleeping on your side can help reduce snoring. Lastly, spending time singing can be beneficial. Singing can increase muscle control in the throat and soft palate, reducing snoring caused by lax muscles.

In conclusion, snoring and sleep apnea are linked to severe quality of life and health problems. Ensuring quality sleep through a healthy lifestyle and seeking medical advice when needed is crucial for overall health and well-being.

References:

(1) Young T, Shahar E, Nieto FJ, et al. Predictors of Sleep-Disordered Breathing in Community-Dwelling Adults: The Sleep Heart Health Study. Arch Intern Med. 2002;162(8):893–900. doi:10.1001/archinte.162.8.893

(2) Chiang JK, Lin YC, Lu CM, Kao YH. Correlation between snoring sounds and obstructive sleep apnea in adults: a meta-regression analysis. Sleep Sci. 2022 Oct-Dec;15(4)