

Sleep apnea and pre-eclampsia share a common warning sign

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Many, but not all, people with sleep apnea develop high blood pressure. In a new study, Yale researchers show those who develop hypertension have many similarities with pregnant woman with pre-eclampsia.

The findings could shed light on individual risk associated with [sleep apnea](#), which is associated with increased risk of heart disease and stroke. At least 15 percent of adults suffer from the condition, which is marked by a cessation of breathing during sleep.

"You wouldn't imagine that a 50-year-old obese man would have so much in common with a 30-year-old pregnant woman but they do," said Dr. Vahid Mohsenin of the Yale Center for Sleep Medicine and senior author of the study in the *Journal of Cardiovascular Disease Research*.

Mohensin and co-author Dr. Behrouz Jafari of the University of California-Irvine found subjects with sleep apnea and hypertension had damage to cells lining blood vessels, whether or not [oxygen levels](#) were lowered. Those with hypertension also had elevated levels of soluble endoglin in their blood, which are known to cause hypertension in women with pre-eclampsia.

Endoglin is already used as a marker of placental malformation and development of pre-eclampsia, a potentially dangerous condition marked sudden onset of [high blood pressure](#) during pregnancy. The current study demonstrates that elevated circulating endoglin is also a marker of hypertension and heart disease in patients with obstructive sleep apnea.

Provided by Yale University

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