

Family support may improve adherence to CPAP therapy for sleep apnea

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A new study suggests that people with obstructive sleep apnea (OSA) who are single or have unsupportive family relationships may be less likely to adhere to continuous positive airway pressure (CPAP) therapy.

Results show that individuals who were married or living with a partner had better CPAP adherence after the first three months of treatment than individuals who were single. Higher ratings of family relationship quality also were associated with better adherence. Results were adjusted for potential confounding factors including age, gender and body mass index.

"This is the first study to explore the role of family factors in CPAP adherence," said lead author Faith Luyster, PhD, research assistant professor in the School of Nursing at the University of Pittsburgh. "Having healthy relationships with [family members](#) can create an environment that supports the patient's use of CPAP."

The research abstract was published recently in an online supplement of the journal *Sleep* and will be presented Monday, June 2, in Minneapolis, Minnesota, at SLEEP 2014, the 28th annual meeting of the Associated Professional Sleep Societies LLC.

The study group comprised 253 patients with OSA who were participating in a CPAP adherence intervention trial. Relationship status at baseline was identified, and family relationship quality was assessed using the 12-item General Functioning subscale of the Family Assessment Device. Treatment adherence was measured objectively, and was defined as average hours of CPAP use per night during a three month follow-up period.

According to Luyster, the results provide a potential target for interventions to improve CPAP adherence.

"Family-based CPAP adherence interventions may help patients who would benefit from family support during the initial treatment period," she said.

The American Academy of Sleep Medicine reports that [obstructive sleep apnea](#) is a common [sleep](#) illness affecting up to seven percent of men and five percent of women. It involves repetitive episodes of complete or partial upper airway obstruction occurring during sleep despite an ongoing effort to breathe. The most effective treatment option for OSA is CPAP therapy, which helps to keep the airway open by providing a stream of air through a mask that is worn during sleep.

More information: "Both Relationship Status and Relationship Quality are Prospectively Associated with CPAP Adherence," *Sleep*, 2014.

Provided by American Academy of Sleep Medicine

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