

**NICOSIA GENERAL HOSPITAL
PULMONOLOGY CLINIC**
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SLEEP APNEA SYNDROME



**WHAT DO WE HAVE TO
KNOW**

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What is Sleep Apnea Syndrome?












Sleep Apnea is a condition characterized by interruptions in breathing during nighttime sleep. These individual's interruptions are known as apneas. When an individual experiences multiple apneas, they are considered to suffer from sleep apnea syndrome.



Their underlying cause is located in the pharynx. When the pharynx narrows, snoring occurs; when it closes completely, apneas result. This leads to a temporary cessation of oxygen supply. In response, the brain briefly awakens, reopens the airways and restores breathing. This cycle may occur numerous times throughout the night, preventing restful sleep. As a result, affected individuals often feel fatigued during the day.









It occurs in 6-8% of men and 2-3% of women.

What are the symptoms of Sleep Apnea?

-  Loud snoring
-  Restless sleep, with frequent movements of the torso and legs
-  Sensation of suffocation
-  Nocturnal enuresis
-  Night sweats
-  Daytime sleepiness and fatigue
-  Morning headaches
-  Memory impairment and concentrating difficulty
-  Trouble waking up

-  Irritability and personality changes
-  Sexual dysfunction or impotence

What is the cause of Sleep Apnea?

-  Weight gain
-  Alcohol consumption
-  Nasal obstruction
Enlarged tonsils and adenoids
-  Certain medications (sedatives)
-  Craniofacial abnormalities
-  Hypothyroidism

Which are the health consequences of sleep apnea syndrome?

- Risk of sudden death
- Myocardial infraction, cardiac arrhythmias
- Arterial hypertension
- Stroke
- Elevated cholesterol and triglyceride levels
- Worsening of diabetes mellitus
- Psychological disorders
- Social isolation
- Loss of employment
- Occupational and traffic accidents



How is Sleep Apnea diagnosed?



Diagnosis is established through a sleep study (polysomnographic examination). The patient is connected to a recording device and sleeps in quiet, single-occupancy room. The system monitors various parameters including episodes of snoring, apnea and hypopnea, blood oxygen saturation and heart rates among others. By morning, clinicals can determine whether the patient suffers from Sleep Apnea Syndrome and access its severity to guide appropriate treatment.

How is Sleep Apnea treated?



- Mild cases may be treated with weight loss, avoidance of smoking, elimination of alcohol and sedative use.
- Severe cases require use of a CPAP device (Continuous Positive Airway Pressure). The patient wears a plastic mask through which pressurized air is delivered, keeping always open and preventing apneas and snoring. Additional interventions may include:
- Dental appliances, surgical procedures
- Medication to address daytime sleepiness