Diagnosis and Management of Sleep-Disordered Breathing

Sleep apnea is recognized as a serious health problem. Approximately one in four US adults suffer from sleep apnea, making it as common as diabetes or asthma. Of those with sleep apnea, more than 90% remain undiagnosed. People with sleep apnea rarely experience deep refreshing sleep and are vulnerable to serious health conditions, like high blood pressure, type 2 diabetes, obesity, and heart disease. In fact, 48% to 83% of patients with chronic conditions like drug-resistant hypertension (HTN), obesity, and type 2 diabetes also have obstructive sleep apnea (OSA).

Despite the high prevalence of sleep apnea, more than 80% of US adults with sleep apnea remain undiagnosed and untreated. The American Heart Association and the American College of Cardiology both now support the screening and treatment of SDB in patients with heart failure. Their 2013 updated guidelines cite that 61% of patients with chronic heart failure had either central or obstructive sleep apnea and a high degree of suspicion for sleep disorders should be maintained for these patients.

What you can do

Consider screening patients with the above comorbidities for OSA. Screening your patients for symptoms and referring them for testing—whether in the lab or in the home—can have a positive impact on their comorbid conditions and overall quality of life.

Correctly identifying sleep apnea patients and helping them stay on therapy are crucial to helping patients sleep better and feel better.

Despite the high prevalence of sleep apnea, barriers such as cost and inconvenience of sleep center testing have prevented patients from being diagnosed. HST offers a more accessible option to traditional laboratory-based sleep testing and may reduce the cost of diagnosis, helping providers diagnose and treat more patients.

The benefits of treatment

Once a patient has been diagnosed with sleep apnea, therapy is prescribed by a primary care physician or sleep specialist. The gold standard therapy for sleep apnea is positive airway pressure (PAP), a term which is often used interchangeably with CPAP.

The benefits of treating sleep apnea are evident from a number of clinical studies. Effective treatment using PAP therapy can improve health conditions like high blood pressure, heart disease and diabetes, give your patients more energy, and allow them to feel more like themselves.
themselves again. It can also relieve symptoms like memory loss, difficulty concentrating, and morning headaches.  

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References

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