



SCREENING FOR PATIENTS AT HIGH RISK FOR OBSTRUCTIVE SLEEP APNOEA: A COMMUNITY BASED SURVEY

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ABSTRACT

Purpose: Obstructive Sleep apnoea (OSA), is a major but under recognized clinical entity resulting from repetitive narrowing or collapse of upper airway during sleep. It may be associated with excessive daytime sleepiness (obstructive sleep Apnea syndrome).

We aimed to estimate adult population at risk for OS in urban and rural field practice by validated survey instruments.

Methods: In this Community based cross-sectional descriptive study, population in the three slums adjoining Urban health centre and three villages near rural health centres were screened by interns using Epworth Sleepiness scale and Berlin Questionnaire.

Results: Adults (N=308) in the age group 18-60 years were recruited. Out of 308, 239 had no risk, 79 had risk of OSA according to Epworth scale and 55 according to Berlin scale. 12 subjects with moderate to high scores confirmed by level 1 polysomnography with Apnoea Hypopnoea Index ranging from > 5 to 30. Occupation, education, exercise, coexisting morbidities, Body mass Index, neck circumference and waist circumference bore statistically significant (p<0.05) relation with these scores.

Conclusion: Obstructive sleep apnea is prevalent in 8-25% of at-risk adult population. Established risk factors are age, snoring, high blood pressure, obesity, diabetes, hyperlipidaemia, metabolic syndrome, and hypothyroidism. Simple questionnaire-based evaluation tools can estimate the risk for OSA. It is very important to evaluate OSA at community level to increase awareness, prevent related morbidity, mortality, encourage healthy lifestyles and initiate necessary treatment in both urban and rural population. Preventive measures if initiated early in the course of disease like evaluation by survey and encouraging healthy life styles can render benefits in mild to moderate OSA. Physicians should be sensitised early so that the disease can be effectively addressed at community level.

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INTRODUCTION

Obstructive sleep apnoea (OSA) is a common chronic disorder characterized by repetitive episodes of complete or partial cessation of airflow for at least 10 seconds with persistent respiratory effort during sleep (GW Pien *et al.* 2015).

These episodes result in a cyclical breathing pattern and fragmented sleep which lead to intermittent blood gas disturbances (hypercapnia and hypoxemia) and surges of sympathetic activation.

Hypoapnea is defined as more than 50 percent reduction of airflow for more than 10 seconds with or without 3% reduction in oxygen concentration.

The obstructive sleep apnea syndrome (OSAS) is defined as

more than five abnormal breathing disturbances (hypopneas or apneas) per hour of sleep combined with symptoms of daytime sleepiness.

Apnea Hypopnea Index (AHI): It is a severity index derived by polysomnography, the gold standard to diagnose OSA (Berry RB *et al.* 2012), categorised as mild (AHI =5 - 15), moderate (AHI=15 to 30) and severe (AHI>30).

Obesity is the main epidemiologic risk factor. Indeed, increases in body mass index, central accumulation of adipose tissue, and neck circumference are strong predictors of disease. The prevalence of OSA, is estimated to be 2-14% (Young T *et al.* 1993), among general population, a significant proportion of patients remain undiagnosed and untreated.

The risk factors for OSA and questionnaire based studies are existent, but not emphasised to be practiced by General physicians in public health point of view.

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Diurnal effects of OSA are excessive sleepiness, morning headaches, mood alteration, depression, irritation, amnesia, decreased libido. Nocturnal symptoms are loud snoring, apnea, choking, nocturia, insomnia.

Physiological changes induced due to nocturnal hypoxia can result in comorbidities.

There is impaired decision making and as a consequence, motor vehicle accidents are a frequent occurrence, which can result in fatal outcomes. OSA has tremendous impact on work and quality of life.

15 -20 % OSA patients belong to OHS (obesity hypoventilation syndrome) characterised by obesity, daytime sleepiness and hypercapnia. A significant proportion of patients diagnosed with OSA based on an increased AHI do not complain of daytime sleepiness.

If untreated, OSA can result in deleterious consequences impacting cardiovascular, cerebrovascular, neurocognitive, social and metabolic systems (Akintunde AA *et al.* 2012).

Polysomnography is the gold standard to confirm OSA (Fleetham J *et al.* 2011).It is an expensive test which records the events at night during sleep. It records respiratory effort, airflow, EEG, EMG, ECG, oxygen saturation and leg movements. It is available at few specialised centres. Atechnologist is required to accurately score sleep in real time. There are few questionnaire based, self-administered tests to evaluate the risk for OSA like Epworth sleepiness scale, Berlin Scale, STOP BANG and Stanford Sleepiness Scale.Epworth sleepiness scale (EPW) has 8 items(Grippi, 2015).It is 70% sensitive and 55.6% specific⁶ in subjects with a history of daytime sleepiness (Table 1).

The Berlin Questionnaire (Fig 1) identified snorers with an AHI 5/hr (based on assignment to the high-risk group) with a sensitivity of 86% and a specificity of 77% (Netzer N *et al.*, 1999).The questionnaire consists of 3 categories scoring snoring, tiredness, sleepiness, blood pressure and body mass index. Patients can be classified into High Risk; if there are 2 or more categories where the score is positive or Low Risk if there is only 1 or no categories where the score is positive.

METHODS

A community based cross-sectional study was done by the department of Respiratory Medicine and the department of Social and preventive Medicine of a medical college between 2017 to 2018, over a period of one year, after obtaining approval from Institutional Ethics Committee, Apollo Institute of Medical Sciences & Research, Hyderabad. Patients were screened after obtaining a written informed consent to assess for OSA risk by documenting excessive daytime sleepiness and snoring respectively. We used two different survey instruments which represented the risk factors to be studied alongside a checklist with demographic details of age, gender, occupation, residence, history of snoring, hypertension, diabetes, hyperlipidaemia, hypothyroidism, personal habits like doing exercise, smoking, alcohol intake, BMI, neck and waist circumference. Recording of demographic details, vitals, EPW and Berlin questionnaire took approximately 15 to 20 minutes per person.

Patients aged 18-60 years, with history of snoring and BMI> 25 were included. Neck circumference of >16 inches for females, >17 inches for males, waist circumference of >35.4

inches in males and >31.4 inches in females was considered as risk factors.

Those with underlying chronic medical conditions such as chronic heart disease (CHD), chronic kidney disease (CKD), chronic lung disease (CLD), uncontrolled diabetes mellitus, malignancy and unstable patients, on CPAP therapy for other conditions, patients with other sleep disordered breathing were excluded.

Subjects were identified to have mild, moderate and severe risk of excessive sleepiness based on the severity scoring (Arnardottir ES *et al.* 2016) according to EPW scale and Low and High Risk for sleep disordered breathing according to Berlin scale (BS).

All the subjects were counselled and advised lifestyle modification, treatment of co morbid conditions. Mild cases were advised to have periodic assessment. Moderate to high-risk cases were further evaluated by polysomnography and managed according to standard guidelines by the department of Respiratory Medicine. Figure 2 depicts the study activities and study conduct.

Statistical Analysis

Sample size: The minimum sample size was arrived at using the Cochran formula $N = Z^2pq/d^2$. The calculated minimum sample size was 308 at 25 % prevalence and 0.05degree accuracy. All statistical analyses were done using SPSS windows version 24.0

RESULTS

Three hundred and eight (males 166, females 142),subjects who met the inclusion criteria were recruited. Subjects were categorized into ≤35 years (n=116), 36- 50 years (n=98) and 51-60 years (n=94). Urban (n=163), and rural (n=145) residency.EPW and BS categorized 229 (74.4%) and 253 (82.14%) under No risk (Table 2).

Table 1 Epworth Scale

Situation: “Usual Way of Life In Recent Times” Chance Of Dozing Total 0–24
 *0 = would NEVER doze,1 = SLIGHT chance of dozing,2 = MODERATE chance of dozing,3 = HIGH chance of dozing

S.No	Situation	Score
1	Sitting and reading	0-3
2	Watching TV	0-3
3	Sitting, inactive in a public place (e.g., a theatre or a meeting)	0-3
4	Lying down to rest in the afternoon when circumstances permit	0-3
5	As a passenger in a car for an hour without a break	0-3
6	Sitting talking to someone	0-3
7	Sitting quietly after a lunch without alcohol	0-3
8	In a car, while stopped for a few minutes in traffic	0-3

Interpretation of EPW scores: and correlation with AHI index.
 0 to 10 = normal range of sleepiness in healthy adults
 11 to 14 = mild sleepiness, (AHI =>5-15)
 15 to 17 = moderate sleepiness (AHI = >5 to 20)
 And 18 to 24 = severe sleepiness (AHI = >8-23)

Table 2 Risk categorisation as per Epsworth score and Berlin score

Total	Normal	EPW	N=79	Berlin	N=55
N=308	N=239	mild N=68	Moderate N=9	high N=2	low N=39
					High N=16

There was a statistically significant difference in EPW score between those with normal and at risk for OSA. Mean±SD EPW and BS was 1.5±3.56, 11.3±3.7, respectively. 25.6% had risk of OSA according to Epworth scale and 17.9% according to Berlin scale which are consistent with expected sensitivity and specificity values. Occupation, education, exercise, coexisting morbidities, BMI, neck circumference and waist circumference bore statistically significant (p<0.05) relation with these scores (Table 3).

Multiple logistic regression was performed to study the risk factors of Epworth sleepiness scale with demographic, morbidity and nutritional variables.

Snoring in first degree relatives had 31.8 times risk (95%CI:6.9-146.8), having dyslipidaemia 7.4 times risk (95%CI:1.3-41.2), not doing exercise have 4.7 times risk (95%CI: 1.5-14.9).The risk of OSA is high among those with co morbidities, and is highest among those with dyslipidaemia (86.4%), type 2 DM (86.2%), hypertension (86.2%) and hypothyroidism (73.3%). Snoring in first degree relative (92.9%) was a risk factor for OSA in 47.1% of the patients.

Table 1 compares EPW score and Berlin scale. Table 2 compares demographic and risk factors with EPW and Berlin questionnaire. Smoking (70) Alcohol consumption (59), were significant risk factors.

Table 3 Comparison of Epworth score and Berlin Score of study parameters

Parameter	EPW score			p value	Berlin Scale		
	Normal n(%)	Risk n(%)	Total		Normal n(%)	Risk n(%)	p value
Age							
≤35 years	74 (24.03)	25 (8.12%)	99 (32.14%)	1.00	81 (26.3%)	18 (5.84%)	1.000
≥ 36 years	155 (50.33%)	54 (17.535%)	209 (67.86%)		172 (55.84%)	37 (12.01%)	
Total	229 (74.4%)	79 (25.65%)	308		253 (82.14%)	55(17.86%)	
Gender							
Female	101 (32.79%)	41 (13.31%)	142 (46.10%)	.241	111 (36.04%)	31 (10.07%)	.102
Male	128 (41.56%)	38 (12.33%)	166 (53.90%)		142 (46.10%)	24 (7.79%)	
Total	229 (74.35%)	79 (25.65%)	308		253 (82.14%)	55 (17.86%)	
Location							
Rural	119 (38.64%)	26 (8.44%)	145 (47.08%)	.004	130 (42.21%)	15 (4.87%)	.004
Urban	110 (35.71%)	53 (17.21%)	163 (52.92%)		123 (39.94%)	40 (12.99%)	
Occupation							
Unskilled	139 (45.13%)	26 (8.44%)	165 (53.57%)	.002	148 (48.05%)	17 (5.52%)	.002
Skilled	90 (29.22%)	53 (17.20%)	143 (46.43%)		105 (34.09%)	38 (12.34%)	
Education							
Illiterate	118 (38.31%)	24 (7.79%)	142 (46.10%)	.002	126 (40.90%)	16 (5.20%)	.007
Literate	111 (30.04%)	55 (17.86%)	166 (53.9%)		127 (41.23%)	39 (12.66%)	
Exercise							
Yes	221(71.75%)	49 (15.91%)	270 (87.66%)	.003	234 (75.97%)	36 (11.69%)	.003
No	08 (2.60%)	30 (9.74%)	3 (0.97%)		19 (6.17%)	19 (6.17%)	
Smoking							
Yes	56 (18.18%)	14 (4.55%)	70 (22.73%)	.276	60 (19.48%)	10 (3.25%)	.478
No	173 (56.17%)	65 (21.10%)	238 (77.27%)		193 (62.66%)	45 (14.61%)	
Alcohol							
Yes	34 (11.03%)	25 (8.12%)	59 (19.16%)	.003	44 (14.29%)	15 (4.87%)	.129
No	195 (63.93%)	54 (17.53%)	249 (80.84%)		208 (67.53%)	40 (12.99%)	
Diabetes							
Yes	04 (1.3%)	25 (8.12%)	29 (9.42)	.001	10 (3.25%)	19 (6.17%)	.001
No	225 (73.05%)	54 (17.53%)	279 (90.58%)		243 (78.9%)	36 (11.69%)	
Hypertension							
Yes	13 (4.22%)	30 (9.74%)	43 (13.96%)	.001	13 (4.22%)	30 (9.74%)	.001
No	216 (70.13%)	49 (15.91%)	265 (86.04%)		240 (77.92%)	25 (8.12%)	
Dyslipidemia							
Yes	3 (0.97%)	19 (6.17%)	22 (7.14%)	.001	05 (1.62%)	17 (5.52%)	.001
No	226 (73.38%)	60 (19.48%)	286 (92.86%)		248 (80.52%)	36 (11.69%)	
Hypothyroidism							
Yes	04 (1.3%)	11 (3.57%)	15 (4.87%)	.001	04 (1.3%)	11 (3.57%)	.001
No	225 (73.05%)	68 (22.08%)	293 (95.13%)		249 (80.84%)	44 (14.29%)	
Snoring in first degree relative							
Yes	226 (73.38%)	60 (19.48%)	286 (92.86%)	.000	238 (77.27%)	48 (15.58%)	.086
No	03 (0.97%)	19 (6.17%)	22 (7.14%)		15 (4.87%)	07 (2.27)	
BMI							
Overweight	124 (40.26%)	21 (6.82%)	145 (47.08%)	.003	136 (44.16%)	09 (2.92%)	.004
Obese	97 (31.49%)	31 (10.06%)	128 (41.56%)		103 (33.44%)	25 (8.12%)	
Morbid obese	08 (2.6%)	27 (8.77%)	35 (11.36%)		14 (4.55%)	21 (6.82%)	
Neck circumference							
>16 inches in females, >17 inches in males	20 (6.49%)	52 (16.88%)	72 (23.38%)	.001	34 (11.04%)	38 (12.34%)	.001
normal	209 (67.86%)	27 (8.77%)	236 (76.62%)		219 (71.10%)	17 (5.52%)	
Waist circumference							
>35.4 inches in males > 31.4 inches in females	22 (7.14%)	66 (21.43%)	88 (28.57%)	.001	38 (12.34%)	50 (15.23%)	.001
Normal	207 (67.21%)	13 (4.22%)	220 (71.43%)		215 (69.81%)	05 (1.62%)	

Berlin Questionnaire
SLEEP EVALUATION IN PRIMARY CARE

1. Complete the following:
Height: _____ Age: _____
Weight: _____ Male/Female: _____

2. Do you snore?
 Yes
 No
 Don't know

3. If you snore, how loud is it?
 Slightly louder than breathing
 As loud as talking
 Louder than talking
 Very loud. Can be heard in adjacent rooms.

4. How often do you snore?
 Nearly every day
 3-4 times a week
 1-2 times a week
 1-2 times a month
 Never or nearly never

5. Has your snoring ever bothered other people?
 Yes
 No

6. Has anyone noticed that you quit breathing during your sleep?
 Nearly every day
 3-4 times a week
 1-2 times a week
 1-2 times a month
 Never or nearly never

7. How often do you feel tired or fatigued after your sleep?
 Nearly every day
 3-4 times a week
 1-2 times a week
 1-2 times a month
 Never or nearly never

8. During your waketime, do you feel tired, fatigued, or not up to par?
 Nearly every day
 3-4 times a week
 1-2 times a week
 1-2 times a month
 Never or nearly never

9. Have you ever nodded off or fallen asleep while driving a vehicle?
 Yes
 No
If yes, how often does it occur?
 Nearly every day
 3-4 times a week
 1-2 times a week
 1-2 times a month
 Never or nearly never

10. Do you have high blood pressure?
 Yes
 No
 Don't know
BMI: _____

Scoring questions: Any answer within box outline is a positive response.
Scoring categories:
Category 1 is positive with 2 or more positive responses to questions 2-6
Category 2 is positive with 2 or more positive responses to questions 7-9
Category 3 is positive with 1 positive response and/or a BMI >30
Final result: 2 or more positive categories indicates a high likelihood of sleep-disordered breathing.

Figure 1 Berlin Questionnaire

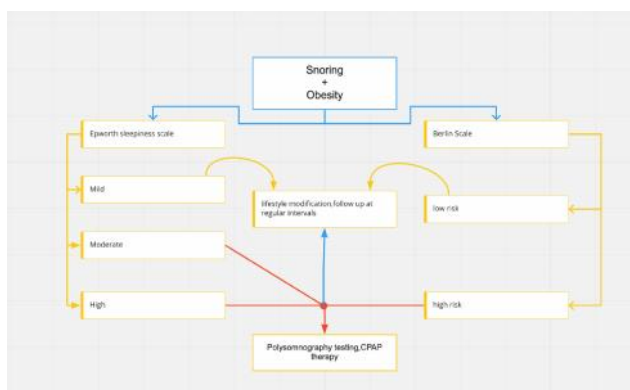


Figure 2 Study activities and study conduct

DISCUSSION

OSA is highly prevalent condition but is under reported due to minimal symptoms without adverse outcomes.

Pathophysiology

Repeated episodes of hypoxemia and normoxemia lead to various pathophysiological conditions, such as intermittent hypoxia, sleep restriction and sleep fragmentation, resulting in sympathetic neural activation, systemic inflammation, oxidative stress loading and changes in hormonal systems. These include the activation of the hypothalamic-pituitary adrenal axis and changes in adipokine profiles, both of which usually lead to fat accumulation and obesity (Desalu O *et al.* 2016).

Risk factors

Ethnicity

Apart from the well-established risk factors (old age, smoking, obesity) ethnicity (Indian or Chinese) is also the predictor of OSA. Reported risk factors in Indian patients are similar to that reported from their counterparts globally (Sharma SK *et al.* 2006).

Obesity

In developing countries like India, prevalence of overweight and obesity are increasing leading to lifestyle-related diseases (IIPS, 2015). The prevalence of obesity was 6.4% among women and 3.2% among men in 1975, it had risen to 14.9% and 10.8%, respectively by 2014.

Reports on global trends estimated that 27.8% of all Indians would be overweight, and 5.0% obese, by 2030 (WHO, 2006). Deposition of fat around the pharyngeal airway is likely to increase the collapsibility of the pharyngeal airway (Shelton KE *et al.*, 1993; Horner RL *et al.*, 1989). Neck circumference more than the cut-off was recorded in our study in 54 subjects (females 21, males 33). Obesity has been associated with functional impairment in upper airway muscles (Carrera M *et al.*, 2004).

Men have increased fat deposition around the pharyngeal airway as compared with women and an increased length of the pharyngeal airway as compared with women (Whittle AT *et al.*, 1999; Malhotra A *et al.*, 2002), hence easy collapsibility.

Deposition of fat around the pharynx increases with aging, independent of systemic fat (Malhotra A *et al.*, 2006; Martin SE *et al.*, 1997). Similar to many upper airway reflexes (Erskine RJ *et al.*, 1993), the genioglossus negative pressure reflex appears to deteriorate with aging (Marcus CL *et al.*, 2004).

Fat deposition around the abdomen leads to reductions in functional residual capacity (Ray CS *et al.*, 1983). Higher waist circumference than the standard was noted in 79 subjects in our study (females 38, males 41). Our study had subjects with central obesity at 49.2 times high risk (95%CI: 13.5-177.9).

Age

Our study revealed OSA prevalence of 5-9 percent in subjects less than 35 years and 12-18 percent in older subjects. In Young *et al.* study the prevalence among 30-39 years of age, is 5% in females and 12% in males ((Marcus CL *et al.*, 2004). In older people (>65 years), the prevalence of sleep apnoea is at least two-fold greater, with estimates ranging between 13 and 32% (Ray CS *et al.*, 1983; Hoch CC *et al.*, 1990).

Snoring

Our study revealed 15-18% risk. Higher BMI, hypertension and high blood sugar levels were noted in snorers, thus posing higher cardiovascular risk (Hoch CC *et al.*, 1990). Our study too supports these observations; hypertension (14%), type 2 DM (9.4%) and dyslipidaemia (7.1%) and hypothyroidism were the comorbidities observed in our subjects with history of snoring.

Diabetes

Sleep-disordered breathing and type 2 diabetes are associated, independent of aging and obesity. Our study revealed a 3-5% risk of OSA in diabetics. Both diabetes and OSA together are a risk for future cardiovascular disease, such as stroke, in which thrombosis is a crucial factor in pathogenesis (India State-Level Disease Burden Initiative Diabetes Collaborators, 2018).

Hypertension

Our study revealed 5-9% risk of OSA on hypertensive subjects. Loss of diurnal rhythm of BP is reported in those

with OSA (Hader C *et al.*, 2005). Martin *et al.* demonstrated that OSA, independent of obesity and other known OSA risk factors, increased the risk of HTN development.

Small elevations in AHI (< 5) are associated with a 42% increased odds of HTN over four years. They also demonstrated that treatment of OSA with continuous positive airway pressure (CPAP) resulted in a long term reduction in this risk.

Occurrence of cardiovascular events in OSA is due to intermittent hypoxia leading to increased oxidative stress, systemic inflammation, and sympathetic activity; intrathoracic pressure changes leading to excessive mechanical stress on the heart and large artery walls; and arousal-induced reflex sympathetic activation with resultant repetitive blood-pressure rises. Screening for OSA in cardiovascular patients is more cost-effective (Dincer HE *et al.*, 2006).

Hyperlipidaemia

Desaturation index, a surrogate marker for hypoxia, was found to be an independent factor contributing to hypercholesterolemia and hypertriglyceridemia (Chou YT *et al.*, 2010). OSA may lead to increase in LDL and decrease in HDL via the stimulation of adrenergic receptors. Our study revealed 5-8% risk for OSA.

Hypothyroidism

The incidence of thyroid disorders in India is high (11%), with hypothyroidism a particular problem that is not adequately controlled in the country at present. Iodine deficiency, unregulated use of pesticides and exposure to endocrine disruptors, unclean drinking water and exposure to industrial pollutants like resorcinol and phthalic acid have been suggested as causes." (Bagchi S, 2014)

Hypothyroidism cause OSA due to mucoprotein deposition in the upper airway, decreased neural output to the upper airway musculature, obesity, and abnormalities in ventilatory control (Lin CC *et al.*, 1992)

Obesity a modifiable risk factor, hence the treatment objective must include weight management. These patients need to reduce a significant percentage of weight for better outcomes (Peppard PE *et al.*, 2013) hence, rigorous weight loss training is required. Peppard and co-workers followed the effects of weight change on AHI. A 10% weight gain predicted an approximate 32% increase in the AHI. A 10% weight loss predicted a 26% reduction in the AHI.

Among the participants, there were current smokers (16.6%); and 20% consumed alcohol.

Sleep hygiene and changes in lifestyle habits, including weight loss, discontinuation or replacement of drugs that directly interfere with upper airway muscle function (benzodiazepines, barbiturates, and narcotics), reducing alcohol consumption (especially during the evening), smoking cessation, regular physical activity, and changing body position during sleep (avoiding the supine position) should always be encouraged in the treatment of OSA (Papandreou C *et al.*, 2013).

Our study supports male preponderance (53.6%) in OSA, which is well documented; Morrish E *et al.* (2008) reported 82% were men in their study.

The prevalence of OSA was 25% (mild 25%; moderate 13%; severe 03%).

Snoring (90%), day time sleepiness (77%) and respiratory pauses are the chief complaints. Similar complaints but at less prevalence were reported by a Nigerian study that reported snoring (33.4%), excessive daytime sleepiness (16.3%), daytime fatigue (10%), feeling drowsy during driving (8%) as the chief complaints.

Low awareness among general population resulted in under-reporting. Similar clinical presentations were reported by Akintunde AA *et al* (2012); the prevalence of OSA is two to three times greater in men than in women and in older individuals (65 yr) compared with middle-aged individuals (30–64 years). Other established risk factors are snoring, high blood pressure, metabolic syndrome, and hypothyroidism.

Community testing by Interns sensitises them to the problem of OSA. There is a need of new pedagogic curriculum in sleep medicine for medical students to enable them to practice as primary care physicians. It can be taught as an elective subject for undergraduate medical students³³ under new competency based medical education guidelines. EPW and Berlin questionnaires are useful assessment tools for screening OSA in the community. OSA has to be recognized as a disease of public health importance. Proper management of OSA will not only benefit the patient but also improves many aspects of society.

Limitation

Our study was done on small, local, mostly migrant population and lack uniform confirmation by gold standard testing by Polysomnography. The survey questionnaires for Indian population are lacking.

CONCLUSION

Obstructive sleep apnea is prevalent in 8-25 percent of at risk adult population. Established risk factors are age, snoring, high blood pressure, obesity, diabetes, hyperlipidaemia, metabolic syndrome, and hypothyroidism. Simple questionnaire-based evaluation tools can estimate the risk for OSA. It is very important to evaluate OSA at community level to increase awareness, prevent related morbidity, mortality, encourage healthy lifestyles and initiate necessary treatment in both urban and rural population. Preventive measures if initiated early in the course of disease like evaluation by survey and encouraging healthy life styles can render benefits in mild to moderate OSA. Physicians should be sensitised early so that the disease can be effectively addressed at community level.

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