

News on sleep apnea for the commercial trucking industry



Support system leads to CPAP success

Do you have a support system in place to help you through your CPAP treatment? Someone to be an inspiration throughout difficult times, to lift you up with words of encouragement, to provide you with sound information about your treatment or simply just listen to your troubles? It could be a spouse, family member, friend, fellow truck driver or your CPAP advocate.

Drivers who have internal family champions such as their spouses,

girlfriends, parents or friends tend to adjust better to their CPAP treatment than drivers who have no support system. Spouses are great because they are often there to remind a driver to wear his/her CPAP, or inform him/her of a mask leak, or to help with equipment cleaning. We often hear from the driver or a spouse, when the driver doesn't want to wear the CPAP or is too tired to go through the motions of putting it on, the spouse makes sure that is not an option.

For those of you who don't have wives or other family support systems, don't worry. We come across drivers who, because their lives have been positively impacted by CPAP treatment, want to give back to their trucking peers and community. We refer to them as "driver champions." These drivers are available to counsel and help other drivers who are struggling with CPAP treatment.

In some cases, driver champions can provide the extra support and

Continued on Page 3

- 2 Editor's Note
- 3 1 in 4 Canadians have OSA
- 4 OSA can lead to dementia
- 4 Lack of sleep could mean shorter life
- 5 Feeling blue? OSA treatment may help
- 5 Warning! Know the symptoms of sleep apnea

PPD: Protecting Professional Drivers is a production of Precision Pulmonary Diagnostics, specializing in premium news and analysis on sleep apnea for the commercial trucking industry, and is published 4 times a year.

Precision Pulmonary Diagnostics
8275 El Rio, Suite 110
Houston, TX 77054
Phone: 713-520-5864
Fax: 713-528-0433
e-mail: info@ppdsleep.com

Precision Pulmonary Diagnostics (PPD), provides professional screening for drivers who are at risk for sleep apnea. This is a HIPPA-compliant, online tool customized to a company's requirements.

Once a driver has been diagnosed with sleep apnea, PPD will provide local diagnostic services with the ease of Web-based scheduling and quick, reliable turn-around – from diagnosis to treatment.

Drivers who require treatment will be fitted for and provided with a CPAP mask, flow generator, and heated humidifier for nightly use.

In order to ensure drivers are using their masks correctly, PPD has partnered with a leading manufacturer of CPAP equipment, masks, and the only provider of a patented wireless compliance monitoring system.

The wireless compliance monitoring system provides daily information of CPAP use, efficacy, and allows real-time troubleshooting of any problems your drivers may be experiencing. With this data, we can enhance your drivers' CPAP acceptance and long-term compliance. In short, our protocols can maximize your results and your return on investment.

Dear Readers,

I have been working with truck drivers and their DOT exams (in one way or another) for 11 years. My goal for the driver is, and will always be, getting him/her through the physical with a 1-2 year medical card. More importantly, my mission is to keep all drivers as healthy and safe as possible on the roads, with the ability to continue earning a living for their families.

Whatever medical condition you may have been diagnosed with often requires regular care, treatment and follow-up with your primary care physician. Sleep apnea is no different.

High blood pressure and diabetes often require daily medication. Poor vision requires glasses. An infection requires antibiotics. Sleep apnea is another condition which requires follow-up care to keep you safe and healthy. The treatment is the use of your CPAP every time you sleep to keep your airway open. This life force of air oxygenates your blood, keeping bodily organs healthy and improves fatigue you may not even realize you were dealing with.

I read with interest an article in the American College of Occupational and Environmental Medicine periodical for DOT examiners (Summer 2011 edition):

Key Question 1: Are individuals with OSA at an increased risk for a motor vehicle crash when compared to comparable individuals who do not have the disorder?

The new studies supported the prior finding, that individuals with OSA are at a significantly greater risk of crash. The magnitude of this risk was felt to be greater than from any other condition the FMCSA regulates – the challenge is how to address this condition given the high prevalence of OSA in commercial drivers.

PPD works to “**protect professional drivers.**” There is no pill a doctor can give you for this disorder – not something like slipping on a new pair of glasses. The treatment for sleep apnea is a CPAP machine but it needs to be used every time you sleep to be effective. The Medical Review Board, under the wings of the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Association, has set the compliance criteria at a minimum of 4 hours a night with use on 70 percent of the nights. Sleeping with your CPAP machine every time you rest will assure you meet these recommendations.

PPD is there to help if you need support with your therapy. Call **713-520-5864** for assistance.

Here's to passing your exam!!

Wendy Sullivan RN
Precision Pulmonary Diagnostics LLC



Follow PPD
on Twitter



1 in 4 Canadians have OSA

Recent Canadian studies have revealed at least 26 percent of adults in the country suffer from obstructive sleep apnea, which has created elevated health care expenditures for many years prior to diagnosis.

According to the Public Health Agency of Canada, patients with sleep disordered breathing use health care services at approximately twice the rate of control subjects prior to diagnosis, and for up to 10 years prior to the diagnosis of sleep disordered breathing.

Direct health care costs of sleep disordered breathing are easier to estimate than indirect costs, which might include effects on the patient's family, decreased work productivity and work-related and transportation-related accidents.

The costs for car and other transportation accidents may be substantial. There have been documented railway accidents and fatalities involving Canadian trains operated by personnel with untreated or

under-treated sleep disordered breathing. The Canadian railway industry now has rigorous guidelines about employees who have been diagnosed with or impaired by sleep disordered breathing.

The Canadian Thoracic Society has recently developed national guidelines for the diagnosis and treatment of sleep disordered breathing. As with any medical condition, the diagnosis of sleep disordered breathing starts with history and physical examination. Sleep monitoring results determine the type and severity of the condition.

Though several well-tolerated and effective treatments have been shown to improve quality of life and cardiovascular health and reduce health care utilization and motor vehicle crashes, the majority of Canadians with sleep disordered breathing remain undiagnosed and untreated. Since obesity is a major risk factor for sleep apnea, efforts to promote healthy weights will have the greatest impact on the prevention of this disease.

Continued from Page 1

encouragement, which can make a huge impact in a driver who is struggling with CPAP treatment. Sometimes just hearing another driver's story or perspective — how they struggled with the mask fit or where the best location to place a CPAP unit in the sleeper berth might be — can help ease the anxiety associated with being a newcomer to the world of CPAP.

And last, your CPAP advocate — the person who is assigned to your case to help you trouble shoot and adjust to your CPAP treatment — is a great and very powerful support system you have available. Your CPAP advocate is there to help you through the ups and downs of treatment. They are available to listen to your issues and help you find solutions to overcome those issues. Long after a driver has graduated from the frequent, and often necessary, interaction with their CPAP advocate — we'll still be available to provide assistance in case the need arises.

Support systems are important, especially when you are facing a diagnosis and treatment you know very little about, or would prefer not to go through at all. Remember, you don't have to do it alone.

For more information on driver champions or contacting your CPAP advocate, contact PPD: xxx.xxx.xxx.

Study: OSA can lead to dementia

Women twice as likely to become cognitively impaired



Sleep apnea can deprive the brain of oxygen and ultimately trigger a decline in cognitive ability, said a new study released by the University of California – San Francisco.

According to study leader Kristine Yaffe, MD, this is the first research to show OSA may actually lead to cognitive impairment. It suggests there is a connection between sleep and cognition and that OSA treatment could help prevent or delay the onset of dementia.

Yaffe is a professor of psychiatry, neurology and epidemiology at University of California – San Francisco, and chief of geriatric psychiatry at the San Francisco VA Medical Center.

The study followed 298 individuals without dementia or a decline in cognitive abilities. Using sophisticated computerized data, researchers were able to monitor brain activity, oxygen concentration, heart rhythm and airflow. The instruments allowed the researchers to monitor reduction of airflow of 30 percent or more.

After compiling data from the participants, Yaffe and her colleagues found that about one third 35.2 percent of all the women developed dementia or mild cognitive impairment, and of those researchers found women with sleep apnea had twice the likelihood of becoming cognitively impaired.

The findings suggest that the key factor leading to diminished cognition was oxygen deprivation. Women who had frequent episodes of low oxygen or

spent a large portion of their sleep time in a state of hypoxia were more likely to develop cognitive impairment. By contrast, no independent connection was seen between dementia and the number of times patients were awakened in their struggle to breathe.

How can you battle OSA? A new report by U.S. Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality states the most effective treatment for the disorder is a CPAP machine.

Lack of sleep could mean shorter life

New research by University College London Medical School suggests a lack of sleep actually ages the brain. Research participants were asked how many hours of sleep they received, first as a baseline and then five years later. For those whose sleep hours shrunk during the five years, showed an accelerated decline in mental ability

during cognitive testing. This decline was equal to an extra 4-7 years of aging.

According to Jane Ferrie Ph.D., lead author of the study, sleep allows neurons to regenerate, which allows the brain to function correctly. So how much is enough? Six to eight hours consistently.

Feeling blue? OSA treatment may help

Mental disorders such as depression and anxiety are often linked to sleep apnea, according to historical research.

Disruptions in an OSA patient's sleep patterns lead to a decrease in oxygen levels in the brain. This can cause numerous symptoms such as irritability, trouble concentrating and cognitive impairment.

Many OSA patients aren't aware they wake or stop breathing during the night. However their moods will reflect the disruption in ways similar to a person with an anxiety disorder or depression.

According to a recent study, depression occurs in patients with OSA more frequently than in the general public. The research concludes about 25 percent of male participants with OSA claimed they have depression. While the link between sleep disruptions and depression are evident, there



is hope. Patients who correct their sleep disorder find a decrease in the symptoms of anxiety and depression. The improved success is related to the return of deep sleep in a patient's sleep cycles.

If you suffer from a mental disorder, consider a sleep examination to see if you suffer from OSA. Treatment for your sleep issues may lower or eliminate your need for treatment of depression and anxiety altogether.

Warning! Know the symptoms of sleep apnea

It can be tough to identify sleep apnea on your own, since the most prominent symptoms only occur when you're asleep. But you can get around this difficulty by asking a bed partner to observe your sleep habits or recording yourself during sleep.

Major signs and symptoms of sleep apnea include:

- Loud and chronic snoring
- Choking, snorting, or gasping during sleep
- Long pauses in breathing
- Daytime sleepiness, no matter how much time you spend in bed
- Waking with dry mouth or sore throat
- Morning headaches
- Restless or fitful sleep
- Insomnia or nighttime awakenings



- Going to the bathroom frequently during the night
- Waking up feeling out of breath
- Forgetfulness and difficulty concentrating
- Moodiness, irritability, or depression

Signs of sleep apnea in children

While obstructive sleep apnea can be common in children, it's not always easy to recognize. In addition to continuous loud snoring, children with sleep apnea

may adopt strange sleeping positions and suffer from bedwetting, excessive perspiration at night, or night terrors.

Children with sleep apnea may also exhibit changes in their daytime behavior, such as:

- Hyperactivity or inattention
- Developmental and growth problems
- Decrease in school performance
- Irritable, angry, or hostile behavior
- Breathing through mouth instead of nose

If you suspect your child may have sleep apnea, consult a pediatrician who specializes in sleep disorders. Once obstructive sleep apnea is diagnosed, surgery to remove the child's tonsils or adenoids usually corrects the problem.