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Sleep-Disordered Breathing Among Women With Fibromyalgia Syndrome.

Original Article

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*Shah, Mansi A. DO *; Feinberg, Stanford MD +; Krishnan, Eswar MD, MPH ++*

Abstract:

Background: In clinical practice, polysomnograms ("sleep studies") are seldom ordered for patients with fibromyalgia, although sleep issues dominate the symptom complex. One reason for this is the lack of understanding how information from these studies could aid clinical decisions.

Methods: The authors conducted a chart review of one rheumatologist's community-based practice where polysomnograms were offered routinely to all women who met the American College of Rheumatology criteria for fibromyalgia. Interpretation of these standardized protocol-based polysomnograms was performed by a board-certified neurologist using standard criteria.

Results: Mean age of the study subjects (n = 23) was 45 (standard deviation, 7.8) years. Median body mass index was 27 kg/m² (interquartile range 20-48). These women had poor sleep with many arousals (median arousal index 23), apnea-hypopneas (median apnea-hypopnea index 22, interquartile range 17-30). Desaturation was common with half the patients having nadir oxygen saturation less than 87%. Restless legs were detected in polysomnograms among many women who clinically denied it (mean leg movement index 5.8).

Conclusions: A large proportion of women with fibromyalgia in a general rheumatology practice had sleep-disordered breathing, which can be detected using sleep polysomnograms. Studies are needed to examine if treatment of the commonly detected sleep apnea will have a beneficial effect on symptoms of fibromyalgia.

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