

Sleep apnea persisting into teens can impact life skills, study finds

June 12 2012

The number of children with obstructive sleep apnea (OSA) declines as they enter adolescence, but the teen years can be a devastating trial of behavior and learning problems for kids with persistent OSA, new research shows.

University of Arizona researchers studied 263 children at two different time periods in their young lives approximately five years apart. Among children who continued to suffer from OSA into their teens, they found a higher rate of problems with attention, [hyperactivity](#), [aggressiveness](#), difficulties controlling their emotions and managing [social situations](#), as well as a diminished capacity to independently care for themselves.

"If left untreated, OSA negatively impacts a youth's ability to regulate their behaviors, emotions and social interactions," said Michelle Perfect, lead author of the study. "These behaviors can interfere with their ability to care for themselves and engage in socially appropriate behaviors – skills that are needed to be successful in school."

These findings could not be attributed to sex, race or ethnicity, body mass index (BMI) or age. The results also suggest that the absence of OSA or even its remission is a protective factor as children move into adolescence, Perfect said.

She noted that rates of impairment defined as at-risk or clinically significant by standardized psychology measurements were double and triple among the young people with OSA compared with their peers

without respiratory issues. These results show the need to identify and treat OSA in children before it persists into their adolescence, Perfect said.

More information: The abstract "Concurrent and longitudinal associations of sleep-disordered breathing with behavioral and adaptive functioning in youth" is being presented today at SLEEP 2012, the 26th annual meeting of the Associated Professional Sleep Societies (APSS) in Boston.

Provided by American Academy of Sleep Medicine

Citation: Sleep apnea persisting into teens can impact life skills, study finds (2012, June 12)
retrieved 9 April 2024 from
<https://medicalxpress.com/news/2012-06-apnea-persisting-teens-impact-life.html>

<p>This document is subject to copyright. Apart from any fair dealing for the purpose of private study or research, no part may be reproduced without the written permission. The content is provided for information purposes only.</p>
--