

Specialized care improves treatment outcomes in patients with sleep apnea

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A new study of patients with obstructive sleep apnea (OSA) found that treatment outcomes were better when patients received care from sleep specialists and accredited sleep centers.

Results show that sleep apnea patients who received care from board certified sleep medicine physicians and accredited sleep centers were two times more likely to be adherent to positive airway pressure (PAP) therapy than those who received care from non-accredited centers and non-certified physicians. Patient satisfaction also was associated with physician certification, and timeliness of care was better at accredited centers.

"We have demonstrated under real-world conditions that sleep center accreditation and sleep medicine board certification are important determinants of patient-centered quality metrics such as adherence to PAP therapy, [patient satisfaction](#), patient education and timeliness of care delivery," said lead author and principal investigator Dr. Sairam Parthasarathy, associate professor of medicine at the University of Arizona in Tucson, Ariz. "These results suggest that health policy decisions should be directed toward care pathways involving accredited facilities and board-certified physicians."

The study results appear in the March 15 issue of the *Journal of Clinical Sleep Medicine*, which is published by the American Academy of Sleep Medicine.

"Board certified [sleep medicine](#) physicians and the team of health care professionals at accredited sleep centers have the specialized training and expertise to provide high quality, patient-centered care for people with a sleep illness," said American Academy of Sleep Medicine President Dr. M. Safwan Badr.

Parthasarathy collaborated with Dr. Shyam Subramanian and Dr. Stuart Quan to conduct the study, which involved 502 patients with OSA at four [sleep](#) centers. Participants received an objective diagnostic evaluation using overnight polysomnography and completed validated questionnaires. Objective PAP therapy adherence was measured three months after therapy initiation.

According to the authors, this is the first multicenter, prospective, comparative effectiveness study performed in the real-world setting to show favorable effects of physician certification and center accreditation on objective PAP adherence in [patients](#) with OSA.

More information: A Multicenter Prospective Comparative Effectiveness Study of the Effect of Physician Certification and Center Accreditation on Patient-Centered Outcomes in Obstructive Sleep Apnea," *Journal of Clinical Sleep Medicine*, 2014.

Provided by American Academy of Sleep Medicine

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