

# Study finds that older adults with sleep apnea have higher odds of hospitalization

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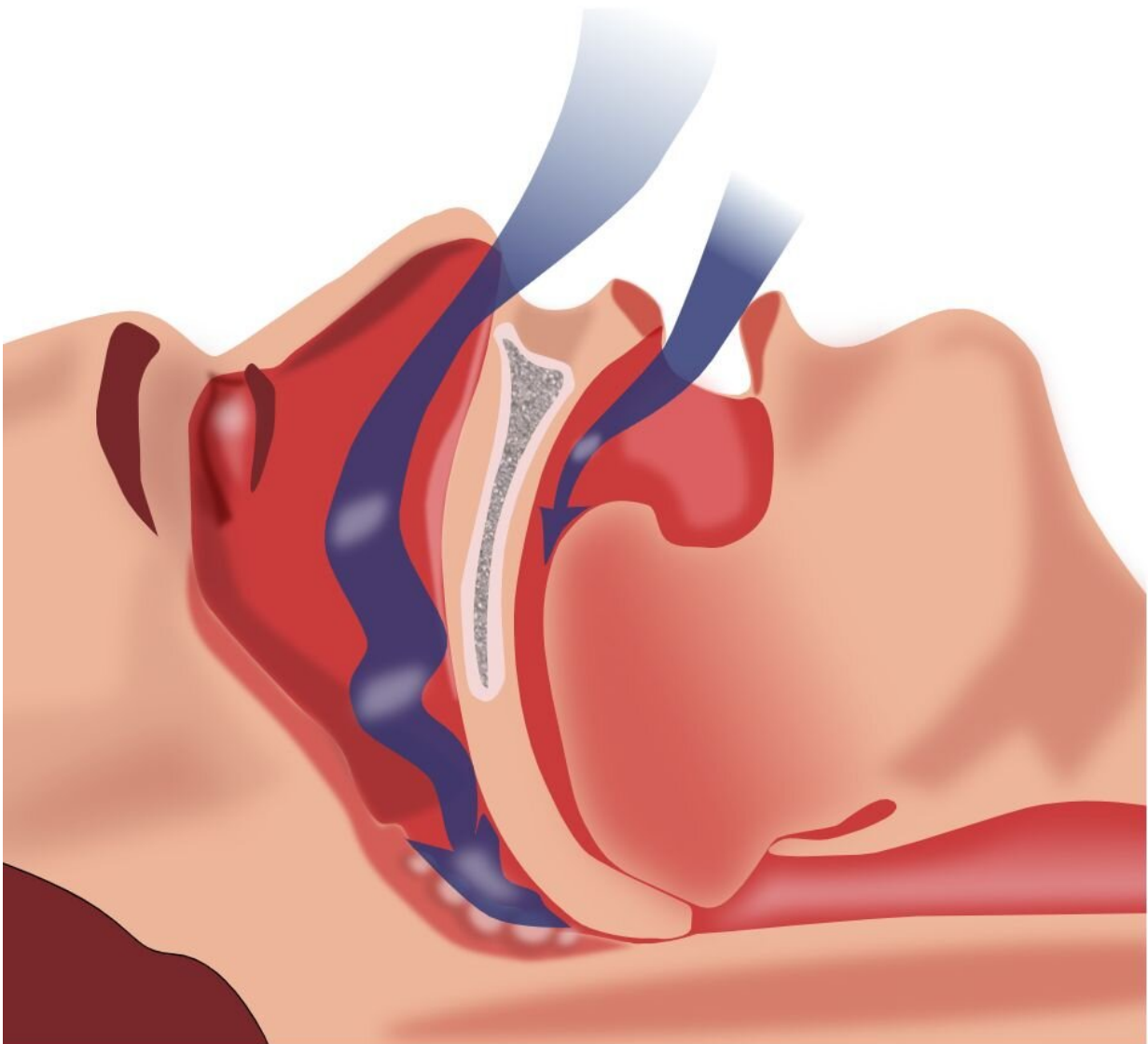


Illustration of obstruction of ventilation. Credit: Habib M'henni / public domain

A new study to be presented at the [SLEEP 2024](#) annual meeting, held in Houston, Texas, June 1–5, found that sleep apnea is associated with increased odds of future utilization of health care services including hospitalization among older adults.

Results show that participants aged 50 years and older with sleep apnea had a 21% higher odds of reporting future use of any health service compared with those without sleep apnea. Specifically, individuals with sleep apnea had 21% higher odds of hospitalization after controlling for potential confounders including demographics, body mass index, [health conditions](#), and depressive symptoms.

"Our research indicates that [older adults](#) who have sleep apnea are more likely to use health services in the future than those who don't have sleep apnea," said lead author Christopher Kaufmann, who has a doctorate in public mental health and is an assistant professor in the department of health outcomes and [biomedical informatics](#) at the University of Florida College of Medicine in Gainesville.

"The findings hold true even after taking into account other factors that may contribute to an increased risk of health service utilization."

According to the American Academy of Sleep Medicine, nearly 30 million adults in the U.S. have [obstructive sleep apnea](#), a chronic disease that involves the repeated collapse of the upper airway during sleep. Untreated, moderate to severe sleep apnea is associated with an

increased risk of medical problems such as hypertension, [coronary artery disease](#), [atrial fibrillation](#), stroke, and Type 2 diabetes.

The researchers analyzed data from 20,115 participants in the 2016 and 2018 Health and Retirement Study, a nationally representative cohort of middle-aged and older adults in the U.S. Participants were surveyed about [sleep disorders](#), including sleep apnea, in 2016 and their subsequent use of health services in 2018. Nearly 12% of participants reported being told by a doctor that they have sleep apnea.

Kaufmann emphasized the need for timely identification and management of sleep apnea in older adults to mitigate its downstream effects on health care utilization.

"Addressing [sleep apnea](#) can not only improve individual health outcomes but also alleviate the strain on health care resources, leading to more efficient and effective health care delivery," said Kaufmann.

This study was supported by grants from the National Institute on Aging and the Sleep Research Society Foundation. The [research abstract](#) was published recently in an [online supplement](#) of the journal *SLEEP* and will be presented Tuesday, June 4, during SLEEP 2024, the annual meeting of the Associated Professional Sleep Societies, a joint venture of the American Academy of Sleep Medicine and the Sleep Research Society.

**More information:** Christopher Kaufmann et al, 1083 Association Between Sleep Apnea and Health Service Utilization: Results from the Health and Retirement Study, *SLEEP* (2024). [DOI: 10.1093/sleep/zsae067.01083](#)

Provided by American Academy of Sleep Medicine

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