

Optimising diagnosis of obstructive sleep apnoea by encouraging GP screening

27th June 2019 – The British Thoracic Society (BTS), Respiratory Futures and the OSA Partnership Group have joined forces to promote the benefits of GP practices getting involved in screening for obstructive sleep apnoea (OSA). The organisations have collaborated to produce a podcast to explore how this might be put into practice and this will be available from 11.00am today on the Respiratory Futures website <https://www.respiratoryfutures.org.uk/debate>.

John Stradling, Emeritus Professor of Respiratory Medicine at Oxford University, and a member of the OSA Partnership Group, chairs the podcast. He states, “OSA remains under-recognised both by patients and doctors. Given the high benefit/cost ratio of treating OSA and the benefits of diagnosis to patients’ quality of life and overall health, it is clearly desirable to identify as many patients as possible.

“However, given the high prevalence of OSA and the long waiting lists for diagnosis and treatment at most sleep units, I believe that it is very unlikely that the diagnosis can remain an exclusively secondary care activity, and this is why we are working with Respiratory Futures and BTS to encourage GP practices to consider adding OSA screening to their existing patient services.”

The GP screening podcast describes the experiences of hospitals and GPs liaising to improve the diagnosis of OSA, with major benefits to both patients and services.

Professor Stradling discusses how a new service might be introduced with Dr Ian Smith, Consultant Chest Physician and Director of Royal Papworth Hospital’s Respiratory Support and Sleep Centre, and Dr Robert Koefman, a GP from the Binfield Practice in Berkshire who has a special interest in ENT.

Professor Jonathan Bennett, Chair of the BTS Board, said, “OSA is a highly debilitating condition but one which can be treated extremely successfully if a diagnosis and the correct care are accessible for all. GP screening is exactly the kind of innovative model of care that is needed in order to improve both patient experience and outcomes. For this reason, we are delighted to have been able to work with the OSA Partnership Group to highlight this important issue.”

The OSA Partnership Group website contains more information about how a service might be introduced, and the contributors to the podcast are willing to support those GP practices that want to find out more. Please go to <https://www.osapartnershipgroup.co.uk> to find out more.

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Editor's Notes

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About the British Thoracic Society

The British Thoracic Society is the UK's professional body of respiratory specialists. The Society seeks to improve standards of care for people who have respiratory diseases and to support and develop those who provide that care. A registered charity, it has about 3,500 members including doctors, nurses, respiratory physiotherapists, scientists and other professionals with a respiratory interest.

<https://www.brit-thoracic.org.uk>

About Respiratory Futures

Respiratory Futures is the platform for resources to support integrated respiratory care, commissioning, innovation and networking. It is working to bring together the diverse UK respiratory sector in order to foster the sharing of best practice, reduce duplication and support the development of new models of care.

<https://www.respiratoryfutures.org.uk>

About the OSA Partnership Group

The OSA Partnership Group is made up of individuals and organisations with an interest in the condition. It includes representatives from the commercial vehicle sector, clinicians, patient groups and those interested in health and safety at work.

The Group's aims are to raise awareness of the symptoms of OSA, the availability of treatment to manage these symptoms and the implications of the condition if untreated.

Much of our campaigning involves working with driving organisations, transport trade bodies and sleep clinics to make the process of coming forward for treatment as straightforward as possible, particularly for those who drive for a living.

<https://www.osapartnershipgroup.co.uk/index.html>