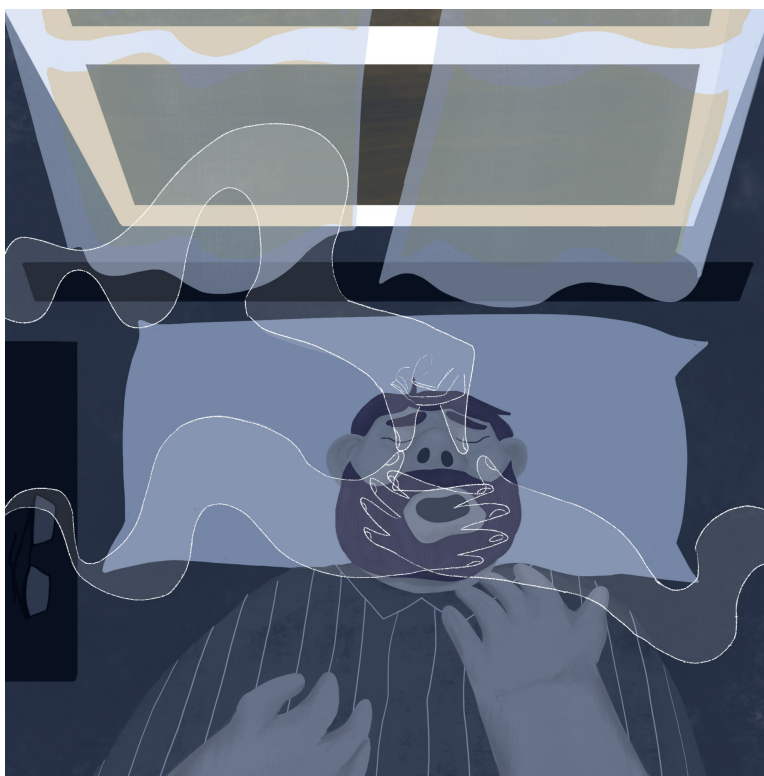


Snoring in the night and Sleepy in the Day? It could be Sleep Apnea!

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Yes you heard right, these are some of the main symptoms of sleep apnea. Back in the days, 20-30 years ago, most people didn't have any idea about this condition. It went under the hood for the most part. Do you remember that old uncle, who had a relatively decent sizable belly, falling asleep on the couch even during the most exciting social gatherings and snoring loudly embracing himself? He most likely had it. ¹.

But why does it matter at all? Well it all goes back to what happens during sleep. During normal sleep, your muscles relax and your metabolism (biochemical reactions in the cells) slow significantly. The body and brain enter a state that allows rejuvenation to prepare you for the next day. Our breathing tube, or upper airway, is maintained open to allow flow of air to the lungs. This is achieved by preserving muscle tone around the upper airway that is just enough to maintain that tube open.



Unfortunately, life is not that great with everybody. In about 10% of us men, and half of that in women, that balance is lost and those muscles can no longer preserve the openness of the tube. The reason for that are numerous, which can be explained in a different article. Nevertheless, the end result is narrowing of the breathing tube or even complete closure. Yes, that is correct, complete closure! Does that sound familiar? Well this is effectively choking! What happens if you choke? Your body will struggle to get the next breath. And that is exactly what happens during sleep: in 10 to 50 seconds of choking, your brain will nudge your body to wake-up and breath. Do you remember any of that? Of course not, because this awakening is so brief that they are not registered in your memory. These arousals (this is the official term) disrupt sleep and prevent the person from having deep sleep. This of it like an scuba diver who tries to dive deeper and deeper to pick the pearls from the surface of the bottom of the sea but he runs of oxygen just few meters from the surface. He will come back tired and without any pearls.

Back to sleep apnea, every arousal brings the sleeper back to superficial sleep preventing the person from having the refreshing deep sleep. The result that he is always sleepy. His body will try to make up for the lost good night sleep all day long...he will fall asleep in office, behind the wheel, at traffic light, in meetings, and the list continues.

This is not the end of the story. Sleepiness and fatigue is one manifestation of sleep apnea. But what about snoring, does it mean that you have sleep apnea for sure? And what happens to blood oxygen, when you choke and how does the heart react to it? Is there an implication of memory and intellect? These are the questions that we will answer in the next articles.

Curious whether you have sleep apnea? Feel free to take our self-assessment that was developed by Dr Alshaer using 4 scientifically researched tools.

1. Reference Number 1, Author Test, 22/09/2019 ↩

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Dr. Alshaer is a physician and a biomedical engineer, who is dedicated to developing intelligent diagnostic and therapeutic medical instrumentation from inception to productization. Also, he has a special interest in electronic embedded design and digital signal processing.

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Since the advent of modern computers and digital circuits, several streams of new technologies have been introduced to enhance the traditional diagnostic method of polysomnography and offer alternatives that are more accessible, comfortable, and economic.

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