

[Psychological aspects of sleep related disorders of respiratory control]

[Article in German]

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An impaired ability to concentrate, loss of intellectual performance, and changes in personality are frequently-mentioned psychological symptoms of sleep apnoea. Apnea-associated disturbances of sleep structure as well as nocturnal cerebral hypoxia are possible causes. Twenty men and two women with an average age of 51.5 years underwent psychological testing. The average apnea index was 36 (range 11 to 92). The following psychodiagnostic procedures were used for screening; attention-strain test (d2) to measure short term concentration ability, numbers-connecting test (ZVT) for the evaluation of cognitive processing speed as an indication of intellectual performance, the Freiburg Personality Inventory FPI-R for assessing personality traits. As compared with the standard random sample of the d2, our patients' ability to concentrate over a period of five minutes does not seem to be impaired. Deficits in patients with sleep apnea are more likely to be found in the care of long-term concentration, especially in monotonous situations. The mean IQ score of our sample (93) is rather low as compared with the mean value of the age-matched sample (100). Patients with an Apnea index greater than 30 tended to have lower IQ-values (87.4) than those with less severe sleep apnea (97). Older patients had significantly lower age-corrected figures (87.2) than younger patients (98). Younger patients with high apnea activity (greater than median) had significantly (ANOVA: interaction alpha = 0.01) lower IQ scores (84.8) than younger patients with less severe sleep apnea (107). Sleep apnea seems to impair cognitive processing speed. Our sample turned out to be normal with respect to the twelve personality traits measured by means of the FPI-R. (ABSTRACT TRUNCATED AT 250 WORDS)

PMID: 2608656 [PubMed - indexed for MEDLINE]