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Sleep apnea syndrome: symptomatology, associated features, and neurocognitive correlates.

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This article reviews the essential features, types, prevalence, pathophysiology, and neuropsychological correlates associated with the sleep apnea syndrome. Persons who experience the intermittent hypoxia and fragmented sleep characteristic of the sleep apnea syndrome tend to exhibit moderate symptoms of diffuse cognitive dysfunction as well as multiple emotional and psychosocial sequelae. It is concluded that more research is required in order to elucidate the relationship between the hypoxic parameters and neurocognitive deficits seen in the sleep apnea syndrome, and that neuropsychological assessment might represent a means whereby the effectiveness of various treatments for sleep apnea may be evaluated.

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