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EVEN PASSIVE SMOKING PROMOTES SNORING

The commonly cited risk factors for snoring (and OSA) have been obesity, male sex and structural abnormalities of the upper airway. Active smoking is a less-commonly cited though well-documented risk factor. Now, a large population-based postal study indicates that even passive smoking contributes to snoring\(^1\). Subjects were 15,555 randomly-selected men and women of four N. European countries. The study focused on habitual snoring, defined as loud and disturbing snoring at least 3 x’s/week. Passive smoking referred to daily exposure at home in never-smokers.

As expected, habitual snoring was more prevalent in current (24.0%) and ex-smokers (20.3%) than in never-smokers (13.7%) \((p<.0001)\). A key finding was that passive smokers reported habitual snoring 1.5 times as often as never-smokers who were not exposed at home (19.8% vs. 13.3%; \(p<.0001\)), and this was independent of obesity, sex and age.

The breakdown of attributable risk of snoring revealed a few surprises. Obesity \((\text{BMI}>30 \text{ kg/m}^2)\) accounted for 4.3% of the risk of snoring compared to a whopping 17.1% of risk associated with a history of ever-smoking. The attributable risk from passive snoring (2.2%) was near that from obesity.

The bottom line is that passive smoking contributes to snoring in adults complements previous, similar findings on passive smoking and snoring in children. Hopefully these findings will both push clinicians to pay greater attention to life-style modifications that might improve snoring and provide yet another reason for smokers to find a way to quit.

If you would like a copy of this article, contact the Sleep Disorders Center at (714) 771-8950.

Raymond J. Casciari, M.D.
Medical Director, Sleep Disorders Center
Sarah Mosko, Ph.D.
Associate Medical Director, Sleep Disorders Center