



Is the knowledge and attitude of physicians in Nigeria adequate for the diagnosis and management of obstructive sleep apnea?

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Abstract

Purpose

The knowledge and attitude of doctors in Nigeria towards obstructive sleep apnea is not known. We evaluated the level of knowledge and attitude regarding OSA among resident doctors in Internal Medicine and general practitioners in Nigeria.

Methods

A cross-sectional survey among doctors during continuing medical education programs was conducted. The Obstructive Sleep Apnea Knowledge and Attitude (OSAKA) questionnaire was used to obtain information.

Results

Two hundred seventy-three doctors (235 resident doctors and 38 general practitioners) participated in the study. The mean knowledge score was 10.7 ± 2.6 (out of a maximum possible of 18) for all participants corresponding to 59 ± 14.4 % knowledge. There was no significant difference in the mean score of resident doctors (10.8 ± 2.5) compared to general practitioners (10.0 ± 2.8), ($t = 2.6, p = 0.10$). Over 70 % of the participants wrongly responded that uvuloplasty was an effective treatment and less than 40 % correctly answered that continuous positive airway pressure treatment was first line for severe obstructive sleep apnea. The mean score on the attitude segment was 3.4 ± 0.6 (maximum possible score of 5) for all participants and 3.4 ± 0.6 and 3.3 ± 0.5 , respectively, for the residents and the general practitioners ($p = 0.47$). Increasing age was negatively associated with level of knowledge, while increasing number of years in medical practice and higher level of residency training was positively associated with higher knowledge scores.

Conclusion

The knowledge of obstructive sleep apnea among resident doctors and general practitioners in Nigeria is inadequate. There is need to improve training on sleep disorders in Nigeria both at continuing medical education programs and during residency training.

Keywords

Obstructive sleep apnea Knowledge Attitude Doctors Residency training Nigeria
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Notes

Compliance with ethical standards

This was a cross-sectional survey conducted among Internal Medicine residents and general practitioners during continuing medical education (CME) programs in Nigeria between 2013 and 2014. It was waived from full ethical review by the Health Research Ethics Committee of the Lagos University Teaching Hospital.

We used a convenient sampling approach to recruit participants into this study and obtained informed consent from all participants.

Sources of funding

No funding was received for this study.

Conflict of interest

The authors declare that they have no conflict of interest.

Comment

This is an interesting article. Even with the high prevalence of OSA, the awareness of physicians regarding the effective identification and treatment of CSA remains low. Increasing the amount of time during medical school and post-graduate training could improve the awareness of physicians. This is especially important in areas with limited access to specialized sleep physicians. Since up to 10 % of the male population has OSA, it is important that primary care physicians understand the risk factors and long term consequences of untreated OSA. This article supports increased training to improve physician awareness.

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