

Child sleep breathing problems studied

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A U.S. study suggests children with high blood pressure might be at risk for sleep breathing disorders.

The University of Texas Medical School study found 60 percent of hypertensive children suffer sleep disordered breathing.

"SDB is important because it can result in daytime sleepiness, limited attention span, poor school performance, hyperactivity, poor growth and increased blood pressure in the lungs," said Dr. Alisa Acosta, lead author of the study.

"We know there's a link in adults between obstructive sleep apnea -- the most common of the SDBs -- and high blood pressure, so we were curious to see if the same link exists in our pediatric population," she said.

Researchers evaluated 15 boys and five girls ages 4 to 18 with primary hypertension who snored, had enlarged tonsils or night-time high blood pressure.

Researchers found 12 of the 20 children tested had SDB: seven had obstructive sleep apnea (more than one apnea episode per hour); four had obstructive hypoventilation; and one had mild SDB.

The study was presented last week in San Antonio during the 60th Annual Fall Conference of the Council for High Blood Pressure Research.

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