

Answering the question: Who should have surgery for sleep apnea?

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Even as more and more people in the United States are diagnosed with obstructive sleep apnea (OSA), there remains a disconnect as to who can benefit from corrective surgery. Leading experts in the field of sleep medicine will attempt to answer the question of who could benefit from surgery, during a moderated discussion at the 2008 American Academy of Otolaryngology-Head and Neck Surgery Foundation (AAO-HNSF) Annual Meeting & OTO EXPO, in Chicago, IL.

Sleep apnea, which affects more than 10 million American, with an estimated additional 10 million undiagnosed, is characterized by loud snoring interrupted by frequent episodes of totally obstructed breathing (obstructive sleep apnea). Serious episodes last more than ten seconds each and occur more than seven times per hour. Apnea patients may experience 30 to 300 such events per night. These episodes can reduce blood oxygen levels, causing the heart to pump harder.

The discussion will focus on understanding what treatments are best suited for different patient populations, while seeking to clarify whether non-surgical options are helping or hindering a patient's treatment.

Source: American Academy of Otolaryngology

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