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## Psychiatry

# CPAP therapy reduced nightmares in patients with PTSD, sleep apnea

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Continuous positive airway pressure, or CPAP, therapy reduced PTSD-associated nightmares in patients with sleep apnea who were being treated at a VA hospital, according to recent study results.

"One out of six veterans suffers from PTSD, which affects their personal, social and productive life," researcher **Sadaka Tamanna, MD, MPH**, medical director of the Sleep Disorders Laboratory at G.V. (Sonny) Montgomery VA Medical Center in Jackson, Miss., said in a press release. "Nightmares are one of the major symptoms that affect their daily life, and prevalence of [obstructive sleep apnea] OSA is also high among PTSD patients and can trigger their nightmares."

Tamanna and colleagues reviewed the medical records of veterans with OSA and PTSD (n=43) who were treated at a VA medical center sleep clinic between May 2011 and May 2012. The researchers extracted the mean number of nightmares per week before treatment and up to 6 months after CPAP prescription. CPAP compliance was determined from memory cards.

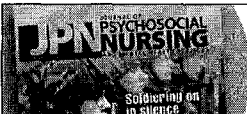
The findings — recently published as an online supplement to the journal *Sleep* and presented at the annual meeting of the Associated Professional Sleep Societies — indicated that CPAP therapy reduced the frequency of nightmares in veterans with (n=25) or without (n=18) REM-related OSA ( $P<.01$ ). CPAP compliance was the greatest predictor of treatment benefit ( $P<.01$ ), and compliance was higher among those with non-REM OSA (75.3%) vs. REM-related OSA (55.8%;  $P=.04$ ).

"Use of CPAP can reduce nightmares among patients with PTSD and sleep apnea," Tamanna told *Psychiatric Annals*. "All PTSD patients should be asked about their sleep and sleep-related symptoms. Screening them with a sleep study would be helpful to determine if they have sleep apnea and if CPAP would be an adjunct therapy to improve the nightmares. Further studies are needed in this field to explore the effect of CPAP on other symptoms of PTSD."

### For more information:

Tamanna S. #0888: Effect of Continuous Positive Airway Pressure (CPAP) Therapy on Nightmares in Patients with Posttraumatic Stress Disorder and Obstructive Sleep Apnea. Presented at: 27th Annual Meeting of the Associated Professional Sleep Societies; June 1-5, 2013; Baltimore.

**Disclosure:** The researchers report no relevant financial disclosures.



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