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The impact of nasal steroids on CPAP compliance in OSAS patients with allergic rhinitis

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Objective: Nasal continuous positive airway pressure (CPAP) is the standard therapy for sleep apnea; however, compliance rates are poor. Among the most commonly cited reasons for non-adherence is nasal obstruction. We sought to examine if nasal steroids actually increases CPAP compliance in OSAS patients with allergic rhinitis.

Methods: Nasal CPAP-intolerant obstructive sleep apnea (OSA) patients, with documented allergic rhinitis, enrolled to this study. Pre and post treatment data were collected on CPAP usage per night and subjective nasal obstruction with the Nasal Obstruction Symptom Evaluation (NOSE) scale questionnaire.

Results: Eleven patients met inclusion criteria and given steroid therapy. CPAP usage increased significantly from 0.5 hours per night pre treatment to 5 hours per night post treatment ($P < 0.05$). Subjective nasal obstruction on the NOSE Scale decreased from 16.1 pre treatment to 5.4 following treatment ($P < 0.05$). CPAP pressure decreased from 11.9 pre treatment to 9.2 post treatment, with a trend toward significance ($P = 0.062$).

Conclusions: This study demonstrates improved CPAP compliance rates following steroid therapy in OSAS patients. Nasal steroid therapy should be offered in nasal CPAP-intolerant allergic subjects to improve CPAP compliance.

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