

# Obstructive Sleep Apnea and its Management in Patients with Atrial Fibrillation

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## DESCRIPTION

Sleep apnea is a common sleep disorder that affects millions of people worldwide. It is characterized by periods of breathing cessation or shallow breathing during sleep, leading to disrupted sleep patterns and other health complications. While Obstructive Sleep Apnea (OSA) is the most commonly diagnosed form of sleep apnea, Central Sleep Apnea (CSA) is a less well-known variant that can have significant implications for a person's health. Unlike OSA, which is caused by the physical obstruction of the airway, CSA is a result of a failure of the brain to signal the respiratory muscles to breathe. This failure is usually caused by an underlying medical condition, such as heart failure or a stroke, or due to the use of certain medications. CSA is less common than OSA and is estimated to affect between 5-10% of people with sleep apnea. One of the main challenges in diagnosing CSA is its similarity to OSA in terms of symptoms. Both forms of sleep apnea can cause snoring, gasping for air, and interrupted sleep patterns. However, there are some key differences between the two types of sleep apnea that can help with diagnosis. For example, people with CSA often report waking up feeling short of breath, while those with OSA may wake up feeling like they're choking or gasping for air. One of the most significant risks associated with CSA is the impact it can have on the heart. When a person stops breathing during sleep, their blood oxygen levels decrease, which can lead to an increase in blood pressure and an increased risk of heart disease. This risk is especially pronounced in people with underlying heart conditions, as CSA can exacerbate these conditions and lead to further complications. Another potential complication of CSA is the impact it can have on cognitive function. People with

CSA often report feeling excessively sleepy during the day, which can impair their ability to concentrate, perform tasks, and even drive safely. Additionally, people with CSA may experience mood swings, irritability, and other emotional disturbances due to the disruption of their sleep patterns. Despite the potential risks associated with CSA, the condition is often underdiagnosed and undertreated. This is partly due to the fact that many people are unaware of the condition, and partly due to the challenges associated with diagnosis. Unlike OSA, which can often be diagnosed through a sleep study, the diagnosis of CSA typically requires a more comprehensive evaluation of a person's medical history, physical examination, and other tests. Once diagnosed, the treatment of CSA usually involves addressing the underlying medical condition that is causing the respiratory failure. For example, people with heart failure may need to undergo treatment to improve their heart function, while those taking certain medications may need to switch to alternative treatments. In some cases, supplemental oxygen or breathing devices may be needed to assist with breathing during sleep.

## CONCLUSION

Overall, central sleep apnea is a complex and often underdiagnosed form of sleep apnea that can have significant implications for a person's health. While the condition can be challenging to diagnose and treat, it is important for people with symptoms of CSA to seek medical evaluation and treatment. With proper management, many of the complications associated with CSA can be prevented or minimized, allowing people to enjoy a better quality of life and improved health outcomes.

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**Received:** 23-Jan-2023, Manuscript No. JSDT-23-22608; **Editor assigned:** 25-Jan-2023, PreQC No. JSDT-23-22608 (PQ); **Reviewed:** 08-Feb-2023, QC No. JSDT-23-22608; **Revised:** 15-Feb-2023, Manuscript No. JSDT-23-22608 (R); **Published:** 22-Feb-2023, DOI: 10.35248/2167-0277.23.12.408.

**Citation:** Cardinali PD (2023) Obstructive Sleep Apnea and its Management in Patients with Atrial Fibrillation. J Sleep Disord Ther.12:408.

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