

Can't Sleep? Do You Have Headaches or TMJ Pain?

New Data shows that this may not be just a coincidence.

For almost 20 years, we have successfully treated patients suffering from headaches and an array of jaw pain symptoms, categorized as temporomandibular joint (TMJ) disorders. People suffering from TMJ disorders can exhibit symptoms like migraines, ear ringing (tinnitus), and vertigo. However, recent data indicates an estimated 75% of people with TMJ also suffer from sleep breathing disorders such as snoring and sleep apnea, which have become huge health concerns in today's society. Concurrently, 52% of people with sleep disorders suffer from or have the potential for TMJ problems. It is estimated, that in the next five years the number one killer in the United States which is heart disease, could actually be attributed to undiagnosed or untreated sleep apnea! When treating these TMJ and sleep patients, a dual approach is highly recommended for proper care of these people.

A combined approach to TMJ and Sleep Disorders

Neuromuscular dentists who routinely treat TMJ disorders have always focused on proper jaw alignment and muscle physiology for overall dental health, a guiding principle that has advantages in treating obstructive sleep apnea. We use various instruments, including advanced muscle tracking technology, to diagnose and treat our TMJ patients. Therefore, in response to the latest research, we realized that it was very appropriate to utilize this same technology to treat our obstructive sleep apnea patients, mainly, because an inaccurate sleep appliance can send these fragile patients into a potential TMJ pain spiral.



Dentally Speaking

by Jeffrey S. Haddad D.D.S.

Patients with TMJ disorders frequently have a destructive or misaligned bite which forces their lower jaw backwards. This backwards positioning can increase the degree of blockage of a person's airway while they sleep, which leads to obstructive sleep apnea (OSA). Conversely, a person with an obstructed airway may clench or grind their teeth, which can deteriorate the bite, leading to TMD symptoms and pain. It's a bit of the chicken or egg syndrome, but the patient isn't concerned with which problem came first; they just want to feel better.

Sally Shrock of Rochester is a patient who experienced symptoms of obstructive sleep apnea. She says her life was changed following OSA treatment. "I love my new sleep appliance! It is not uncomfortable at all and well worth the cost. For the first time in years, I now sleep like a baby with very little snoring. What a blessing that is for me and for my husband."

Self-treatment for snoring or sleep apnea is NOT recommended because one-size-fits-most sleep apnea appliances can hurt, not heal. The incorrect appliance can force patients into a headache/jaw pain spiral. We have unfortunately treated patients in our practice who have been adversely affected by the use of over-the-counter, Internet ordered, or poorly made sleep appliances. When new, precisely measured sleep appliances were made based on their personal muscle physiology, their pain symptoms were relieved and their sleep issues were addressed.

There is a significant increase in the number of patients we treat for com-

bined obstructive sleep apnea/TMJ disorders. We continue to refine treatment approaches and the design of oral therapy appliances as new information, research and technology have become available. This new research and data about the similarities between TMJ and sleep disordered patients makes it extremely important for dentists to make sure they are placing their patients in muscularly comfortable jaw positions when making dental sleep appliances. We have seen very predictable and successful results with this technique and continue to treat and monitor our patients in this very safe, measured approach.

Jeffrey S. Haddad, DDS of Doolin & Haddad Advanced Dentistry, completed his dental education at the University of Michigan in 2001. Dr. Haddad is a fellow of the prestigious Las Vegas Institute for Advanced Dental

Studies. He lectures nationally on cosmetic dentistry, TMJ and sleep disorders and dental implants. For more information, visit www.rochesteradvanceddentistry.com.



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