SNORING

JUST SNORING OR SOMETHING MORE?



The disturbance of breathing during sleep can range from minor problems to the health of patients (snoring) to heavy sleep apneas (breathing interruption during sleep) which may be for peripheral reasons (obstructive sleep apnea) or on the rare occasions the central reasons which potentially without treatment may lead to serious cardiovascular problems (pulmonary hypertension, right heart failure, etc.).

The syndrome causes the obstructing of breathing and affects the daily activity of patients including drowsiness, weakness, lack of concentration, irritability, increased risk of accidents, etc.

Patients are usually unaware of the risks of these daily difficulties and come to the doctor because of established pressure from their social environment that does not tolerate snoring.

Snoring is more common in men and the overweight. 45% of adults snore occasionally, while 25% snore on an everyday basis. Alcohol, smoking, over eating especially during the evening as well as some medications can aggravate the problem.

The risks that snoring causes include reduced muscle tone in the tongue & neck, enlarged muscle

mass tissue in the nasopharynx e.g. adenoids in the nose, elongated soft palate, or uvula, deviated septum, polyps in nose etc.

As for the cause of obstructive sleep apnea, it's usually a blockage caused by movement of the tongue at the rear of the throat during sleep. This can be seen e.g. in retrognathism (small jaw).

There are many patients who may experience 30-300 episodes of apnea at night resulting in the reduction of oxygen in the blood and therefore may require an intensive heart operation.

The treatment of snoring and obstructive sleep apnea depends on accurate diagnosis. The patient must undergo a complete and thorough examination. Apart from routine examination, a sleep-recording test should always be done. This examination is necessary before any treatment because it is the only one that can capture the scale of the problem (apnea, hypopneas,how it gets oxygen during sleep, etc.).

After this examination and according to the results of the test, the doctor will decide a more therapeutic sleep pattern to follow. This can be simply lowering body weight, stopping smoking, a surgical therapy. If still high level of sleep-apnea syndrome may be necessary to implement continuous positive pressure using nasal masks (CPAP).