

India Healthcare Forum

Tackling Sleep Disorders

'Where India took five years in tackling sleep disorders, the US, Germany and other countries took 20 years to reach'

Whether it's CPAP, oral appliances, or surgery— there are several ways to deal with patient suffering from Obstructive Sleep Apnea (OSA), which affects 40 per cent of population, said Dr N Ramakrishnan, Director, Critical Care Services and senior consultant, critical care and sleep medicine, Apollo Hospitals, Chennai. He was speaking at India Healthcare Forum, organised by The Economist Intelligence Unit Limited, on December 16th in Mumbai. He also spoke on the importance of awareness about sleep disorders and the need for insurance companies to cover treatment related to OSA. Dr Manvir Bhatia, Chairperson (sleep medicine), Sir Ganga Ram Hospital, cautioned the audience about how a large number of population working in the night shift, who drink caffeine through out the night and then pop sleeping pills to get sleep, suffer from debilitating sleep disorders in the long-run.

Dr Sanjeev Mehta, Consultant, Lilavati Hospital, lamented on the low awareness about sleep disorders among GPs which result in late referrals and thus delayed treatment. Dr Sujeet Rajan, consultant respiratory physician, Bombay Hospital Institute of Medical Sciences urged medical equipment companies to reduce the cost of CPAP so that more patients can afford it. Dr JP Rawat, Chief Psychiatrist, Jeevan Ram Hospital deliberated upon the corporate attitude towards workforce well-being in India and the major health challenges facing workers today. Discussions followed on how these disorders reduce daytime productivity and increase risks of accidents and illness. Experts emphasised on importance of 'power nap' (a siesta after lunch hours), which enhances productivity and also results in improved longevity. They cited the example of Spaniards who follow this practice and have shown better longevity. According to Peter White, Vice-President, Philips Respironics Asia Pacific, Philips Home Healthcare Solutions, 'Though the awareness of sleep disorder picked up late in India, but what is commendable is that where India took five years in treating sleep disorders, the US, Germany and other countries took 20 years to reach.'

Dr Prashant Chhajed, Director, Department of Pulmonology, Fortis Hiranandani Hospital and Sumit Goel, Vice President, Ernst & Young gave their perspective on food habits, work patterns and other environmental factors that have increased the incidence of disorders.