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ABSTRACT

Prevalence and Possible Risk Factors of Obstructive Sleep Apnea Among Children in The West Bank.

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Background: Getting enough hours of sleep is important for children to grow and develop in a healthy way. However, many of them experience sleep problems at some point in their childhood. Obstructive sleep apnea is one of these problems, which in some cases can be really threatening. Approximately 15% of children show mild to moderate symptoms, while most of these cases are undiagnosed.

Objectives: To determine the extent of obstructive sleep apnea cases among children in The West Bank, and to study the relationship between these cases and the associated possible risk factors.

Methods: A descriptive cross-sectional study was carried out using a validated questionnaire (Pediatric Sleep questionnaire (PSQ)), which was translated into Arabic by professional translators. More questions were added to the questionnaire including demographics and risk factors sections. 266 printed samples were collected over two months from children's mothers and other guardians from West Bank society.

Data were analyzed using SPSS (Statistical Package for Social Sciences) version 25, descriptive statistics including mean, standard deviation for continuous variables, percentages for categorical variables.



The sleep apnea score was calculated by dividing the number of items answered positively "yes" by the number of items answered positively or negatively, scores >0.33 are considered positive and suggestive of high risk for sleep apnea.

The relationships between sleep apnea score and risk factors were examined using two independent samples to test.

Results: About 23 % (n=60) of the children had an elevated apnea score > 0.33 , suggesting high risk for sleep apnea.

Sleep apnea score was significantly higher for those having the risk factors than those who do not have them for each of them except "having anemia" where the sleep apnea score for those who have anemia was lower than those who don't have anemia but the difference was not significant, where $p\text{-value} = 0.461 > 0.05$, and "having birth defect in the skull face" where the sleep apnea score for those who have this defect was higher than those who don't have this defect but the difference was not significant, where $p\text{-value} = 0.555 > 0.05$.

Conclusion: The prevalence of pediatric obstructive sleep apnea is higher in the West Bank than it is globally, making it to be considered a serious condition. This calls for a real increase in societal awareness, particularly among mothers and other guardians. Mothers and other guardians should pay closer attention to , be extra cautious of, the aforementioned risk factors and try to manage them as much as possible. For instance, smoking in the same room as the child (passive smoking) should be avoided as it poses a significant risk for sleep apnea.

Keywords: Children, sleep apnea, West Bank, Prevalence, risk factors, OSA, PSQ.