Title: Quality of life in patients at first time visit for sleep disorders of breathing at a sleep centre

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Body: Sleep-disordered breathing adversely affects daytime alertness and cognition. Patients suspected of suffering from sleep apnea present several typical symptoms including habitual snoring (often disruptive to bed partners), waking feeling unrefreshed, excessive daytime sleepiness (EDS) or fatigue, lack of concentration, memory impairment, and at times psychological disturbances. The aim of the study was to evaluate different aspects in the health related quality of life (HRQoL) in a group of subjects who were referred to our sleep laboratory for their first examination for suspicion of OSA. One hundred ninety-eight consecutive outpatients (152 M) (mean age 52.7±12.8 years, range 18-82 years; mean BMI 31.1±6.6 kg/m², range 17.3-57.8 kg/m²) underwent Psychological General Well-Being Index (PGWBI), and SF-12 self reported questionnaires as a measure of the HRQoL, and ESS for detecting subjective sleepiness before nocturnal diagnostic examination. Comparisons were performed by Mann-Whitney test. Subjects showed a variable HRQoL score. No relation was found with AHI severity (range 0-129 n/h), T90% (range 0-87.9 %) or BMI. Subjects with ESS >10 showed a significantly worse HRQoL profile (p<0.001) in physical and mental component summaries of SF-12 and in all components of PGWBI (anxiety, depressed mood, positive well-being, self-control, general health and vitality). In conclusion, the higher disease severity was not related to a worse HRQoL perception. HRQoL among subjects referred for suspicion of OSA is related to excessive subjective sleepiness.