



Kaiser Permanente and ResMed Present Data at SLEEP 2021

Data show higher rate of COVID-19 infection among those with untreated obstructive sleep apnea

JUNE 10, 2021 – Kaiser Permanente and ResMed will present a poster at the 35th annual American Academy of Sleep Medicine’s [SLEEP 2021](#) meeting, being held virtually June 10-13. The poster focuses on new research that shows that people with untreated obstructive sleep apnea (OSA) were associated with a higher rate of COVID-19 infection than those who received PAP treatment.

The data showed a dose-response association of OSA severity on infection rate with patients with untreated mild OSA with a 2% rate of COVID-19 infection, while patients with severe untreated OSA had a COVID-19 infection rate of 2.4%, which was significantly higher than those treated with PAP at 1.4%. Additionally, researchers were surprised to find that apnea patients who engaged in PAP therapy with good adherence had even lower COVID-19 infection rates than patients without OSA (1.3% vs 1.7%, respectively). The study also identified obesity, other chronic illnesses, and being on Medicaid to higher COVID-19 infection rates. An important finding that shows health inequality was that Black and Hispanic patients had higher COVID-19 infection rates.

The study, conducted by a team of investigators from Kaiser Permanente in Southern California and led by pulmonologist Dr. Dennis Hwang, collected data on nearly 82,000 U.S. patients who were evaluated for sleep disorders at Kaiser Permanente’s Southern California sleep clinic between 2015 and 2020. Of those, 1,493 tested positive for COVID-19 infection. The data collected includes patients’ electronic health records, sleep study findings, and remotely collected data on PAP therapy.

“These findings demonstrate the critical importance for people with OSA to receive and stay on PAP therapy,” said ResMed’s Chief Medical Officer, Carlos M. Nunez, M.D. “In addition to COVID-19, OSA can increase a person’s risk for an array of chronic diseases, so it’s necessary for healthcare providers to educate patients on the importance of proper CPAP use so they can get optimal sleep, which may help keep their immune systems healthy.”

The full study abstract can be viewed [here](#).

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