

New Sleep Research Study Commences at the Woolcock Institute

Sydney's Woolcock Institute of Medical Research will investigate the links between treating sleep apnea and reducing the risk of heart disease and diabetes.

Prof. Ron Grunstein, Head of the Woolcock's Sleep Research Group said, "There is a large body of evidence suggesting that a vicious cycle exists between sleep apnea and Metabolic Syndrome (a predictor of future diabetes and heart disease in people with obesity). It appears that sleep apnea worsens aspects of metabolic syndrome and metabolic syndrome may worsen sleep apnea."

Sleep apnea causes people to have '*breathing pauses*' while asleep and shallow breathing. It is often characterized by loud snoring and daytime sleepiness. At least 20 per cent of the adult population is thought to suffer from sleep apnea, left untreated it can lead to cardiovascular disease.

"The aim of this research is to see whether treatment of sleep apnea improves a key component of metabolic syndrome, namely blood fat levels. Elevated levels of certain fats in the blood such as triglycerides are strongly associated with cardiovascular disease. We also know that patients with increased fat in the liver are more prone to developing Type II diabetes. By treating sleep apnea we hope to demonstrate an improvement in these abnormalities" Prof. Grunstein said.

The study will track patients for five months during which time they will be given three overnight sleep studies at RPA Hospital, Camperdown.

Volunteers will be reimbursed travel expenses. To participate in the trial you need to be male, aged 21 or older, have been diagnosed with sleep apnea, or suspect that you have it and have never used CPAP.

To register or enquire about the study telephone - 1800 828 717.