

SNORING IN CHILDREN MIGHT BE AN ALLERGIC TYPE DISEASE

New Australian research from the Woolcock Institute of Medical Research shows that children who snore have different risk factors to adults who snore.

The research found that snoring is in fact part of the spectrum of childhood allergic diseases. So whilst the condition looks and sounds similar in adults and children it can have quite different causes and risk factors.

The study published in the latest edition of the international medical journal, *Pediatric Pulmonology* has established children with rhinitis who were first born, were exposed to maternal tobacco smoke during the first year of life and/or who had asthma and/or eczema at age five years were more likely to snore.

Breastfeeding, birth weight, body mass index at age 4.5 years and respiratory function whilst awake were found to be unrelated.

The study cohort was drawn from participants in the Australian Childhood Asthma Prevention Study (CAPS) – a randomised controlled trial of dietary intervention and house dust mite avoidance during the first five years of life.

219 children within the original study group had rhinitis and of these, 213 could provide information on snoring. Almost 60% of these children snored at least once per week including 26% who snored more than three nights per week. This is a very high prevalence in five year old children and is partly due to all of the children having rhinitis which is often found in children who snore.

Dr Nat Marshall, from Sydney's Woolcock Institute of Medical Research said the study aimed to investigate whether the risk factors for snoring among pre-school children with rhinitis were similar to those for allergic diseases in a group of children who have been monitored since before they were born.

“Our findings were consistent with the view that snoring forms part of the spectrum of allergic diseases in childhood,” he said.

While the study findings are limited to children with rhinitis, Dr Marshall explained the observed associations with risk factors could apply to the general population where previous studies have also found strong associations between allergic or inflammatory diseases and snoring.

“Snoring can be an early manifestation of more serious sleep-disordered breathing, so it’s not necessarily a harmless condition,” Dr Marshall added. “In adults habitual snoring is seen as being caused by anatomical problems in the airway or obesity. But in children it seems that snoring is much more closely related allergy and inflammation”.

“Our data hopefully contribute to a clinician’s ability to effectively spot snoring in pre-school children in order to identify potentially more serious obstructive sleep apnoea.”

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