Diabetes and Snoring

Obstructive sleep apnea (OSA), a common cause of snoring in adults, is frequently associated with diabetes. Obesity is an important contributing factor, but repeated pauses in breathing during sleep can also affect blood sugar regulation. Each time breathing stops and then resumes, the sympathetic nervous system is activated. This response can increase blood glucose levels and insulin secretion. Over time, repeated activation may make the body less responsive to insulin. This is known as insulin resistance, a major factor in the development of type 2 diabetes.

Diabetes can also accelerate atherosclerosis, or plaque buildup, in the coronary arteries that supply blood to the heart muscle. This increases the risk of heart conditions such as myocardial infarction (heart attack) and angina. In a randomized study involving 39 participants with prediabetes and OSA, optimal continuous positive airway pressure (CPAP) treatment reduced daytime resting heart rate compared with placebo (Pamidi et al., 2020). Although this finding is relevant to cardiovascular health, the study did not directly demonstrate a reduction in cardiovascular events.

Moderate-to-severe sleep apnea is more common in people with hypertension or type 2 diabetes. In one study, sleep apnea was 2.3 times as common among people with hypertension, 1.5 times as common among those with diabetes, 1.5 times as common among those with dyslipidemia (abnormal blood lipid levels), and 2.2 times as common among those with metabolic syndrome. Hypertension and type 2 diabetes were also associated with a higher prevalence of sleep apnea even in people without obesity. Therefore, patients with diabetes should be aware of the possibility of sleep apnea even if they are not overweight (Matsumoto et al., 2020).

Clinical Evaluation and Care at Keiyu Ginza Clinic

At Keiyu Ginza Clinic, we evaluate adults who snore for obstructive sleep apnea, particularly patients aged 30 and older, because snoring may progress to OSA. Based on the results of sleep testing and each patient's clinical condition, treatment options may include oral appliance therapy, CPAP, laser procedures to reduce symptoms, pharyngoplasty under general anesthesia, maxillofacial surgery, or bariatric surgery. We provide these treatments through Japan's health insurance system, as applicable.

For patients with diabetes, our clinic works closely with Tokyo Saiseikai Central Hospital, a pioneering institution in diabetes care in Japan. Internal medicine physicians from the hospital also practice at our clinic, allowing us to provide coordinated care that includes medical management. If you are concerned about snoring or would like to discuss treatment options, please contact Keiyu Ginza Clinic for a consultation.

References

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