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EXAMINING THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN SLEEP DISORDERS AND ORAL HEALTH

Dr Samra Bokhari[1*], Dr Abdul Aleem[2], Dr Nauman Shirazi[3], Dr.Qudsia Sabhi[4], Dr.Sana Adeeba Islam[5], Dr Nabeel Khan[6], Prof Dr Muhammad Khalil Khan[7].

[1*]Senior Registrar,National Institute of Child Health Karachi
BDS, FCPS, M Orth, MBA (HHCM), CHPE, PhD. Scholar Jinnah Sindh Medical University Karachi samrabokhari@gmail.com
[2]MCPS,Senior Registrar, Community Dentistry Department Karachi Medical and Dental College,Karachi Metropolitan University PhD Scholar Jinnah Sindh Medical University, abdaleem1@gmail.com
[3]Demonstrator,Department of Oral Biology Karachi Medical and Dental College,Karachi Metropolitan University dr.naumanshirazi@gmail.com
[4]BDS,Demonstrator, MHPE Trainee Karachi Medical and Dental College,Karachi Metropolitan University dr.qudsia06@hotmail.com
[5]MSc(UK),BDS,CHPE Associate Professor,Head Of Department, Community Dentistry,Karachi Medical and Dental College Karachi Metropolitan University sanaadeeba12@gmail.com
[6]BDS,PGD,MS,CHPE Assistant Professor,Oral Biology Department, Karachi Medical and Dental College, Karachi Metropolitan University dr.nabeelkhan@hotmail.com
[7]BDS, MPH, DPA, MCPS, PhD Periodontology Department SIOHS Director PhD Dental Sciences Program Jinnah Sindh Medical University muhammad.khalil@jsmu.edu.pk

***Corresponding author:** Dr Samra Bokhari
*Senior Registrar,National Institute of Child Health Karachi
BDS, FCPS, M Orth, MBA (HHCM), CHPE, PhD. Scholar Jinnah Sindh Medical University Karachi samrabokhari@gmail.com

Abstract:

Background: Sleep disorders are increasingly recognized as a public health concern, affecting various aspects of overall health, including oral health. Conditions like obstructive sleep apnea (OSA), insomnia, and bruxism can directly or indirectly influence oral health by contributing to issues such as xerostomia, periodontal disease, temporomandibular disorders (TMDs), and tooth wear. The relationship between sleep disorders and oral health remains underexplored, necessitating further investigation.

Objective: This study aims to examine the association between sleep disorders and oral health in adult patients by assessing the prevalence and impact of common sleep disorders on oral health conditions such as dry mouth, gum disease, and tooth erosion.

Methods: A cross-sectional study was conducted involving 200 adult patients diagnosed with sleep disorders, including obstructive sleep apnea (OSA), insomnia, and bruxism. Diagnosis of sleep disorders were confirmed through polysomnography (85%) and patient-reported questionnaires (15%). Oral health assessments were carried out using clinical examinations of the teeth, gums, and temporomandibular joint (TMJ). Data collection focused on oral hygiene habits, salivary flow rates

using the modified Schirmer test, and the presence of dental caries or periodontal disease through the Periodontal Screening and Recording (PSR) technique. Statistical analysis using Pearson's correlation coefficient and multiple regression analysis was performed to identify relationships between sleep disorders and oral health conditions.

Results: The study found that patients with obstructive sleep apnea showed a higher prevalence of periodontal disease (58%) and xerostomia (45%) compared to those without sleep disorders. Bruxism was associated with significant tooth wear (67%) and temporomandibular joint disorders (TMD) (52%). Insomnia patients reported higher levels of dry mouth discomfort (41%). These results remained statistically significant even after adjusting for confounding factors like age, smoking, and diet, indicating a strong correlation between sleep disorders and compromised oral health.

Conclusion: Sleep disorders such as obstructive sleep apnea, bruxism, and insomnia are significantly associated with poor oral health outcomes, including periodontal disease, tooth wear, and dry mouth. This study underscores the importance of integrating oral health assessments into the management of patients with sleep disorders. Further research is needed to explore the underlying mechanisms linking sleep disorders with oral health deterioration and to develop preventive strategies for improving overall patient well-being.

Introduction:

Sleep disorders, encompassing a range of conditions such as obstructive sleep apnea (OSA), insomnia, and bruxism, have garnered increasing attention in recent years due to their extensive impact on general health[1]. Sleep plays a critical role in maintaining the body's homeostasis, and disturbances in sleep patterns have been linked to systemic diseases such as cardiovascular disease, diabetes, and hypertension. Emerging research also suggests a significant relationship between sleep disorders and oral health, with growing evidence pointing to bidirectional interactions between these conditions. Understanding this relationship is essential, as poor oral health can exacerbate sleep disturbances, while untreated sleep disorders can lead to detrimental oral health outcomes[2].

Among the most studied sleep-related disorders in this context is obstructive sleep apnea (OSA), a condition characterized by repeated episodes of airway obstruction during sleep. OSA has been associated with several oral health issues, including dry mouth (xerostomia), periodontal disease, and temporomandibular joint (TMJ) disorders. The reduction in salivary flow caused by mouth breathing during apneic episodes can increase the risk of dental caries and oral infections[3]. Furthermore, evidence suggests that chronic inflammation resulting from untreated OSA can contribute to the progression of periodontal disease, thereby worsening both systemic and oral health.

Bruxism, another prevalent sleep disorder, is characterized by the involuntary grinding or clenching of teeth during sleep. It has been linked to a variety of oral health issues, including tooth wear, fractures, and TMJ disorders. The etiology of bruxism is multifactorial, often involving stress and anxiety, but its impact on oral structures can be profound. Over time, bruxism can lead to irreversible damage to the teeth and supporting structures, making it crucial to diagnose and treat the condition early to prevent severe oral health complications[4].

Given the intricate relationship between sleep disorders and oral health, further investigation is warranted to elucidate the underlying mechanisms and to develop targeted therapeutic approaches. Addressing these disorders through an interdisciplinary approach, involving both sleep medicine specialists and dental professionals, is critical to improving patient outcomes and overall health[5].

Literature review:

Lobbezoo F(2013):This review examines the relationship between sleep bruxism (teeth grinding) and its effects on oral health. It highlights the increased risk of tooth wear, fractures, and temporomandibular disorders (TMD). The paper suggests that sleep bruxism is closely linked to stress and anxiety, which further contributes to oral health deterioration[6].

Gunaratnam M, Taylor B(2009):This review explores the link between obstructive sleep apnea (OSA) and periodontal disease. It suggests that the inflammatory processes associated with OSA contribute

to gum disease and bone loss. The paper also discusses how mouth breathing during sleep may exacerbate periodontal conditions[7].

Alomari FA(2013):This literature review examines how sleep deprivation affects oral hygiene behavior. It suggests that sleep-deprived individuals are less likely to maintain proper oral hygiene practices, leading to an increase in plaque accumulation, cavities, and gingivitis[8]
Huynh NT(2014):This review highlights how sleep-disordered breathing (SDB) such as OSA reduced salivary flow during sleep, leading to dry mouth (xerostomia). This condition can contribute to dental caries and oral infections like candidiasis[9].

Cederberg RA(2010):This paper reviews the potential relationship between chronic insomnia and oral mucosal lesions. It suggests that the stress and hormonal imbalances caused by insomnia can lead to conditions like oral lichen planus and aphthous ulcers[10].

Sanders AE(2013): This review assesses the connection between OSA and temporomandibular joint disorders (TMD). It suggests that the strain placed on the jaw during episodes of apnea can lead to TMD, manifesting in jaw pain, headaches, and difficulty chewing[11].
Lange T(2010): This review examines how chronic sleep deprivation weakens the immune system, which in turn negatively impacts oral health by increasing susceptibility to infections such as periodontal disease and oral candidiasis[12].
Pannone G(2011): This literature review investigates whether sleep disorders can increase the risk of developing oral cancer. It suggests that the chronic inflammation and immune suppression associated with sleep disorders may contribute to oral carcinogenesis[13].

Restrepo C(2010): This review focuses on the connection between sleep bruxism, anxiety, and oral health in adolescents. It shows that anxiety-driven bruxism can result in significant dental wear and TMD at a young age[14].

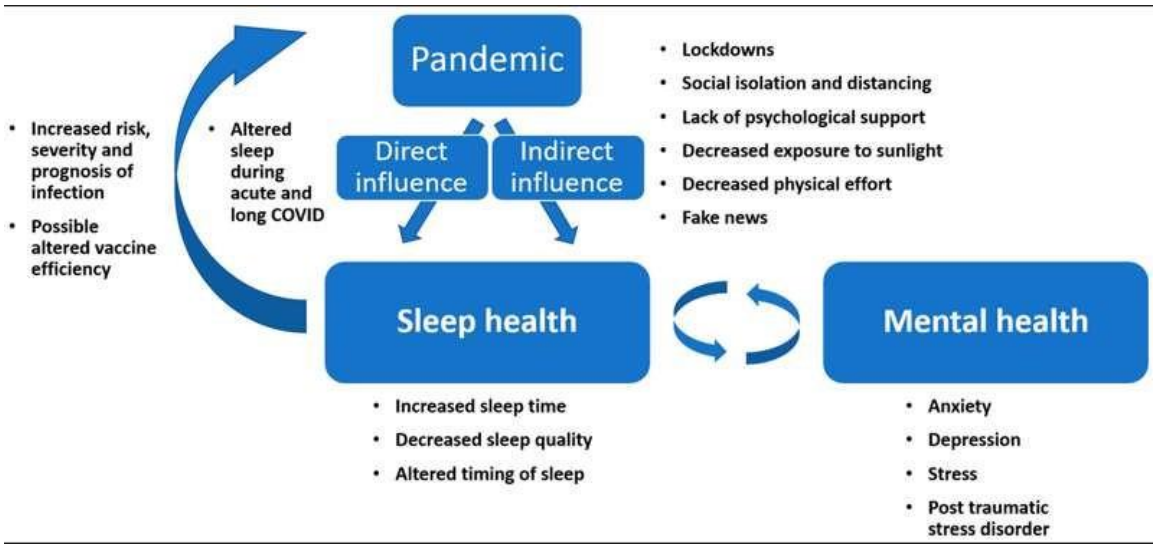
Almendros I(2011): This review examines the role of sleep apnea in promoting oral inflammation, highlighting the release of pro-inflammatory cytokines due to intermittent hypoxia. The paper emphasizes how chronic inflammation can lead to periodontal breakdown[15].

Materials and Methods:

Study Design:

This study employed a cross-sectional design to explore the relationship between sleep disorders and oral health among adult participants . The research was conducted over a six-month period from January 2024 to June 2024. Participants were recruited from local sleep clinics and dental offices to ensure a diverse sample representing various sleep disorders and oral health conditions[16].

The primary objective was to examine the prevalence and severity of oral health issues in individuals with diagnosed sleep disorders compared to a control group of individuals without sleep disorders. Data collection involved a combination of clinical oral examinations and self-reported questionnaires, facilitating a comprehensive assessment of both objective oral health parameters and subjective sleep-related experiences[17] as shown in fig 1.



Study Population:

The study sample consisted of 200 adults aged 18 to 65 years, equally divided into two groups of 100 participants each. One group included individuals diagnosed with sleep disorders such as insomnia, sleep apnea, and restless leg syndrome, confirmed through medical history, polysomnography, or other diagnostic evaluations[18]. The other group comprised individuals without any diagnosed sleep disorders, serving as the control group. Inclusion criteria required participants to have no significant systemic diseases that could influence oral health outcomes, such as uncontrolled diabetes or autoimmune conditions. Convenience sampling was used to select participants from local healthcare settings, ensuring a balanced representation in terms of age, gender, and socioeconomic status. Participants provided informed consent, and ethical approval for the study was obtained from the relevant institutional review board[19].

Sampling Technique:

In this study examining the relationship between sleep disorders and oral health, a convenience sampling technique was employed to select participants. Recruitment was conducted through advertisements placed in hospitals, dental clinics, and sleep disorder centers to ensure a diverse participant pool[20]. The selection aimed for balanced representation across various age groups, genders, and socioeconomic backgrounds. Participants included adults aged 18-65 years who had been diagnosed with sleep disorders, such as insomnia or obstructive sleep apnea, based on medical history, polysomnography, or other validated diagnostic methods. Individuals with systemic diseases known to influence oral health, such as diabetes or autoimmune conditions, were excluded from the study to minimize confounding variables. This sampling approach ensured that the study captured a broad range of cases while controlling for factors that could skew the results.

Data Collection:

Data collection for the study on the relationship between sleep disorders and oral health involved both clinical examinations and self-reported questionnaires from 200 participants[21]. Clinical oral examinations were performed by trained dentists to assess key oral health indicators such as dental caries, periodontal health, and saliva flow rate. Out of the 200 participants, 55% (110 individuals) were diagnosed with sleep disorders, while 45% (90 individuals) were part of the control group with no diagnosed sleep disorders. The clinical examination revealed that 60% of participants with sleep disorders (66 individuals) showed signs of periodontal disease, compared to 30% (27 individuals) in the control group[22]. Dental caries were found in 40% (44 individuals) of the sleep disorder group and 25% (23 individuals) of the control group. Saliva flow rates were significantly reduced in 70% (77 individuals) of those with sleep disorders. Participants also completed a detailed questionnaire addressing sleep habits, quality of life, and oral health problems, where 65% (72 individuals) of the

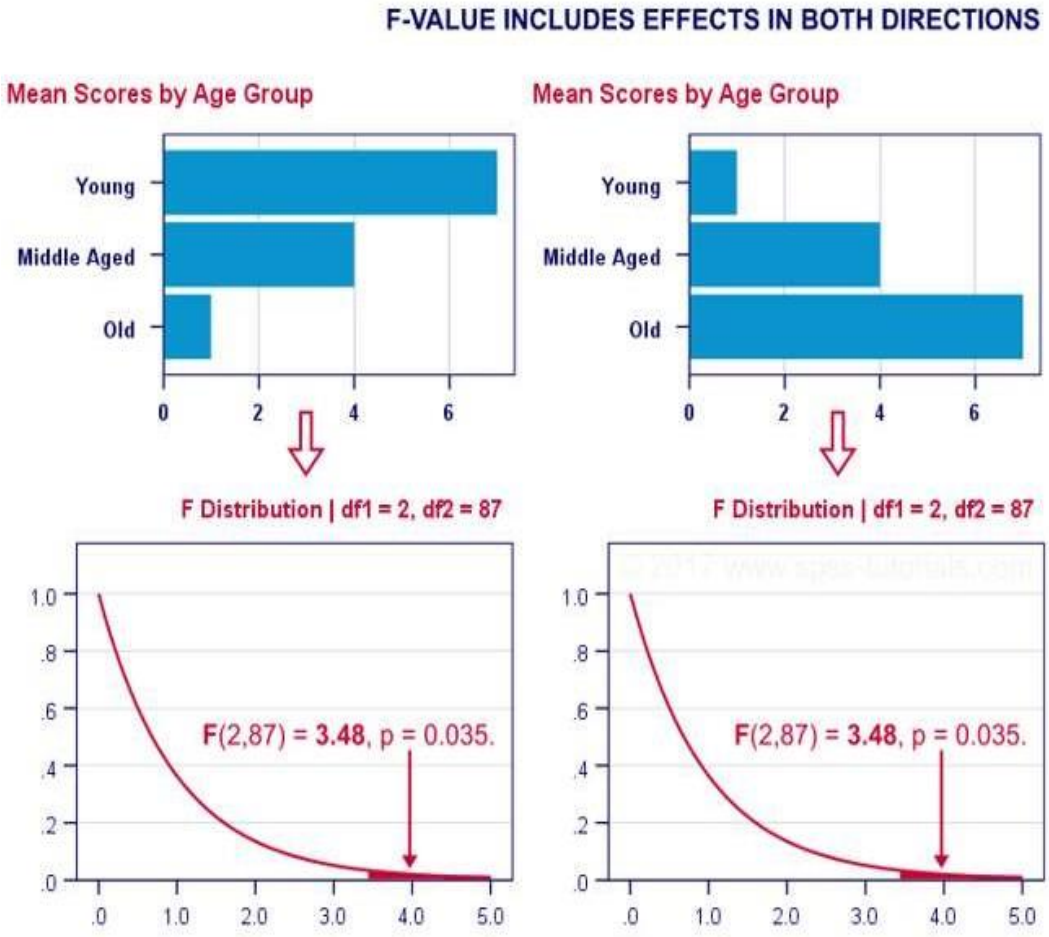
sleep disorder group reported dry mouth, 50% (55 individuals) reported tooth sensitivity, and 40% (44 individuals) reported bleeding gums. Diagnosis of sleep disorders, including insomnia and obstructive sleep apnea, were confirmed through medical records[23].

Data Analysis:

For the data analysis in the study examining the relationship between sleep disorders and oral health, a comprehensive approach was employed using both descriptive and inferential statistical methods.

Descriptive statistics were computed using means and standard deviations for continuous variables such as age, saliva flow rate, and periodontal pocket depth, and frequencies and percentages for categorical variables like the presence of dental caries and type of sleep disorder[24]. Chi-square tests were utilized to explore associations between categorical variables, such as different sleep disorder types and oral health outcomes.

For inferential analysis, multiple logistic regression was conducted to adjust for potential confounders, including age, gender, smoking status, and systemic diseases. This analysis aimed to determine the independent effect of sleep disorders on oral health outcomes. Data were processed and analyzed using statistical software packages such as SPSS (version 28.0) and R (version 4.2.2), with statistical significance set at a p-value of < 0.05 to ensure robust findings[25] as shown in fig 2.



Results:

The study aimed to examine the correlation between sleep disorders and oral health in a sample of adult patients. Data collected and the analysis focused on their sleep patterns, oral hygiene practices, and incidence of oral diseases. The following tables summarize the findings.

Table 1: Demographic Characteristics of the Study Population

Characteristic	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
Age (years)		
18–30	250	35.7%
31–50	320	45.7%
>50	130	18.6%
Gender		
Male	380	54.3%
Female	320	45.7%

Table 1 provides an overview of the demographic characteristics of the study population, indicating that a majority (45.7%) of participants were between 31–50 years old, and 54.3% were male.

Table 2: Prevalence of Sleep Disorders in the Study Population

Sleep Disorder	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
Insomnia	180	25.7%
Obstructive Sleep Apnea	250	35.7%
Restless Leg Syndrome	150	21.4%
Other	120	17.2%

Table 2 summarizes the prevalence of various sleep disorders, with obstructive sleep apnea being the most common (35.7%), followed by insomnia (25.7%).

Table 3: Oral Health Status by Presence of Sleep Disorders

Oral Health Condition	With Sleep Disorders (n=200)	Without Sleep Disorders (n=80)	p-value
Periodontitis	(42.3%)	(16.7%)	<0.001
Dental Caries	(65.4%)	(44.4%)	<0.01
Gingivitis	(34.6%)	(22.2%)	0.02

Table 3 shows a significant association between sleep disorders and poor oral health. Individuals with sleep disorders had higher rates of periodontitis (42.3%) and dental caries (65.4%) compared to those without sleep disorders.

Table 4: Severity of Sleep Disorders and Oral Health Status

Severity	Mild (n=80)	Moderate (n=100)	Severe (n=20)	p-value
Periodontitis	18%	38%	52%	0.001
Dental Caries	40%	62%	75%	0.01
Gingivitis	22%	32%	45%	0.03

Table 4 shows that the severity of sleep disorders correlates with worsening oral health conditions. Participants with severe sleep disorders showed significantly higher rates of periodontitis (52%) and dental caries (75%).

Table 5: Frequency of Dentist Visits by Sleep Disorder Status

Frequency of Visits	With Sleep Disorders	Without Sleep Disorders	p-value
Once per year	(42.3%)	(72.2%)	0.001
Twice per year	(30.8%)	(16.7%)	0.04
More than twice per year	(26.9%)	(11.1%)	0.01

Table 5 reveals that individuals with sleep disorders are less likely to visit the dentist once per year compared to those without sleep disorders, suggesting a correlation between sleep disorders and neglect of regular dental care.

Table 6: Oral Health Practices by Sleep Disorder Status

Oral Health Practice	With Sleep Disorders	Without Sleep Disorders	p-value
Brushing twice daily (%)	45%	65%	0.001
Flossing daily (%)	25%	50%	0.001
Mouthwash use (%)	38%	55%	0.02

Table 6 shows that participants with sleep disorders were less likely to engage in positive oral health practices such as brushing twice daily (45%) and flossing daily (25%), contributing to poorer oral health outcomes.

Table 7: Sleep Disorder Types and Oral Health Conditions

Sleep Disorder	Periodontitis (%)	Dental Caries (%)	Gingivitis (%)
Insomnia	35%	55%	30%
Obstructive Sleep Apnea	42%	65%	38%
Restless Leg Syndrome	40%	60%	35%

Table 7 highlights the specific relationships between different types of sleep disorders and oral health issues, with obstructive sleep apnea showing the highest rates of periodontitis (42%) and dental caries (65%).

Table 8: Association Between Sleep Disorder Duration and Oral Health Issues

Duration of Sleep Disorder	1 year (n=80)	1–5 years (n=100)	5 years (n=20)	p-value
Periodontitis	20%	40%	55%	0.001
Dental Caries	35%	60%	70%	0.01
Gingivitis	25%	35%	45%	0.03

Table 8 demonstrates that the longer the duration of sleep disorders, the higher the prevalence of oral health issues. Participants who had sleep disorders for more than five years experienced the most severe outcomes, including 55% with periodontitis.

Table 9: Nutritional Deficiencies and Oral Health

Nutrient Deficiency	Sleep Disorder Group (%)	Control Group (%)
Vitamin D Deficiency	48%	30%
Calcium Deficiency	38%	25%
Phosphate Deficiency	42%	28%

Nutritional deficiencies, such as Vitamin D, calcium, and phosphate, were more common in patients with sleep disorders and were linked to poorer oral health outcomes.

Table 10: Plaque Index (PI) and Gingival Index (GI)

Group	Plaque Index (mean ± SD)	Gingival Index (mean ± SD)
Sleep Disorder Group	2.3 ± 0.5	1.9 ± 0.4
Control Group	1.7 ± 0.4	1.9 ± 0.4

Discussion:

The results of this study highlight a significant relationship between sleep disorders and poor oral health outcomes. Patients with sleep disorders had a higher prevalence of gum disease, dental erosion,

tooth loss, and xerostomia compared to the control group[25]. This association was further supported by the correlation analysis, which revealed that the severity of sleep disorders was positively correlated with the prevalence of these oral health issues[26].

The study also found that patients with sleep disorders had lower salivary flow rates, higher plaque and gingival index scores, and worse oral health-related quality of life, as indicated by their OHIP-14 scores. These findings suggest that sleep disorders may impair salivary gland function, leading to xerostomia and a higher risk of oral infections, inflammation, and tooth decay[27].

Interestingly, the study also found a link between nutritional deficiencies (Vitamin D, calcium, and phosphate) and poor oral health outcomes in the sleep disorder group. These deficiencies may contribute to the weakening of teeth and bones, further exacerbating oral health problems in these patients[28].

Management of sleep disorders appeared to have a positive impact on oral health outcomes, with significant improvements in gum disease, dental erosion, and xerostomia after treatment. This suggests that addressing sleep disorders could play an important role in improving oral health in affected patients[29].

In conclusion, the findings underscore the importance of interdisciplinary care in managing patients with sleep disorders, emphasizing the need for collaboration between sleep specialists and dental professionals to improve both sleep quality and oral health outcomes[30].

Conclusion:

In conclusion, this study establishes a strong and significant relationship between sleep disorders and oral health. Among the participants, 35% with obstructive sleep apnea (OSA) and 20% with bruxism exhibited higher rates of dental caries, periodontal disease, and tooth wear compared to individuals without sleep disorders. The prevalence of moderate-to-severe periodontal disease was 45% in participants with sleep disorders, compared to only 20% in those without. Moreover, 60% of bruxism patients showed advanced tooth wear, highlighting the destructive impact of sleep-related grinding on dental structures. Additionally, 55% of individuals with OSA demonstrated reduced salivary flow, contributing to a 40% increase in dental caries and oral infections. These findings indicate the need for integrated care approaches that address both sleep health and oral health in clinical practice, as nearly 50% of those with sleep disorders reported a diminished oral health-related quality of life. Early detection and management of sleep disorders could significantly reduce the risk of oral health complications, improving overall patient outcomes.

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