

How Sleep Apnea Injures Your Brain

Patients with sleep apnea have an elevated risk of stroke if they also have higher serum levels of certain precursors to coronary artery disease and lesions associated with silent brain infarction.

Researchers examined silent brain infarction and brain tissue death in 50 male patients with sleep apnea. The percentage of silent brain infarction was higher for those with moderate to severe sleep apnea (25 percent) than it was for obese subjects with similar problems (6.7 percent).

Use of nCPAP, which is designed to reduce episodes of stopped breathing associated with sleep apnea, also lowered serum levels of proteins associated with cerebrovascular disease.