Did Osama bin Laden Suffer from Sleep Disordered Breathing?

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LETTER TO THE EDITOR

On May 2, 2011, a covert US Navy SEALs operation assaulted Osama bin Laden's residential compound presumably while the terrorist leader was sleeping.¹ Photographic evidence suggests that someone, possibly bin Laden himself may have been using a continuous positive airway pressure (CPAP) device to treat sleep disordered breathing (SDB) (see photo).²

ABC NEWS has reported that they acquired video footage from an external source that was inside the residential compound the day after the early morning raid. According to the network, a portion of the video includes the bedroom where bin Laden was killed from gunshot wounds to the head. At second 33 what appears to be tubing with a length and diameter similar to that seen on CPAP machines is visible on the floor at the edge of the bed. Subsequently, at second 47 the camera pans over to reveal that the tubing is attached to a black and gray CPAP machine.²

While other family members and couriers for the al-Qaeda leader allegedly lived in the residential compound, the leader was apparently found in the bedroom with two of his wives when US armed forces arrived.³ While details regarding bin Laden's health are unknown, he was reported to have possibly suffered from renal disease a condition that places him at higher risk for SDB.⁴ In particular a recent cross-sectional study demonstrates that nearly 65% of patients with chronic kidney disease had obstructive sleep apnea, the most common cause of SDB.⁵

A Continuous Positive Airway Pressure (CPAP) machine was found on the floor of Osama bin Laden's bedroom. This photo is used with written permission from ABCNEWS.

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