Is dynamic MRI a suitable method for every sleep apnea patient ?

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Dear Editor,

We read with great interest the article by Bhawna et al. entitled “Role of dynamic MR imaging in obstructive sleep apnea” [1]. They emphasized that MR imaging of the upper airway is very useful in detecting the level and cause of obstructive sleep apnea (OSA). However, Sanner et al. [2] reported that MR imaging was performed while the patients were awake and this situation probably does not reflect the anatomical abnormalities during sleep. In Bhawna’s study the number of patients who were awake or asleep during MR imaging was not mentioned. MR imaging is a suitable device to show the soft tissue details but it is a noisy machine that keeps the patient awake unless the patient is sedated. As mentioned in the article ‘No conscious attempt was made to put the patients to sleep’.

If a silent MR could be invented, this study can be repeated while all the patients are asleep during the procedure; it could be a good predictor for the anatomical abnormalities in OSA patients.

References

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2. Sanner BM, Heise M, Knoblen B, et al. (2002) MRI of the pharynx and treatment efficacy of a mandibular advancement device in obstructive sleep apnoea syndrome. Eur Respir J 20:143–150

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