



# Assessing the Knowledge and Awareness of Obstructive Sleep Apnea among Patient Families in Saudi Arabia: A Qualitative Study [Letter]

Yilin Jiang <sup>1</sup>, Narina A Samah <sup>1</sup>, Heng Zhou <sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>School of Education, Universiti Teknologi Malaysia, Skudai, Johor, 81310, Malaysia; <sup>2</sup>Department of student Affairs, Chongqing Medical University, Chongqing, Yuzhong, 400016, People's Republic of China

Correspondence: Narina A Samah, Email [narina@utm.my](mailto:narina@utm.my)

## Dear editor

We carefully reviewed the recently published article, “Assessing the Knowledge and Awareness of Obstructive Sleep Apnea among Patient Families in Saudi Arabia: A Qualitative Study”.<sup>1</sup> This study addresses an essential health issue, particularly in regions where obstructive sleep apnea (OSA) remains underdiagnosed and undertreated. By focusing on the lived experiences of patients’ families, the research provides important insights into a frequently overlooked aspect of healthcare—the critical role family members play in influencing and supporting treatment adherence, especially for conditions like OSA that require significant lifestyle changes.

However, there are several methodological areas that could benefit from further exploration. Methodologically, the study relies solely on interview data from family members without triangulating this with other data sources, such as family members’ diaries, input from healthcare providers, or objective measures like medical records or continuous positive airway pressure (CPAP) usage data.<sup>2</sup> Incorporating triangulation through multiple data sources would enhance the reliability and validity of the findings by providing a more comprehensive understanding of the family’s experiences and involvement in OSA management.

In the discussion, the study focuses primarily on CPAP therapy but does not sufficiently explore alternative treatment options (eg, positional therapy, oral appliances, or surgery), nor does it assess how family awareness affects decisions regarding these alternatives.<sup>3</sup> Investigating family knowledge of and attitudes toward different treatment options would provide a more complete picture of how families approach OSA management and whether they are aware of alternatives to CPAP therapy. Additionally, while the study acknowledges its Saudi Arabian context, it does not fully address the cultural factors that may influence family dynamics, healthcare decision-making, or attitudes toward OSA treatment.<sup>4,5</sup> The absence of a deeper exploration of these cultural nuances limits the study’s ability to offer culturally relevant recommendations for improving awareness and treatment adherence.

Overall, this research offers valuable insights into the challenges faced by families of OSA patients, particularly within the Saudi Arabian context. Its findings highlight the need for public health interventions and enhanced education about OSA. Future studies should aim to expand on these findings by addressing the identified cultural, systemic, and educational gaps to further improve both awareness and management of OSA.

## Disclosure

The authors report no conflicts of interest in this communication.

## References

1. Al Nufaei ZF, Alluhibi RH, Alsabiti MB, et al. Assessing the knowledge and awareness of obstructive sleep apnea among patient families in Saudi Arabia: a qualitative study. *Int J Gen Med*. 2024;17:4213–4225. doi:10.2147/IJGM.S472087

2. Natow RS. The use of triangulation in qualitative studies employing elite interviews. *Qual Res*. 2019;20(2):160–173. doi:10.1177/1468794119830077
3. Mohamed AM, Mohammed OM, Liu S, et al. Oral appliance therapy vs. positional therapy for managing positional obstructive sleep apnea; a systematic review and meta-analysis of randomized control trials. *BMC Oral Health*. 2024;24(1):666. doi:10.1186/s12903-024-04277-8
4. Seixas AA, Trinh-Shevrin C, Ravenell J, Ogedegbe G, Zizi F, Jean-Louis G. Culturally tailored, peer-based sleep health education and social support to increase obstructive sleep apnea assessment and treatment adherence among a community sample of blacks: study protocol for a randomized controlled trial. *Trials*. 2018;19(1):519. doi:10.1186/s13063-018-2835-9
5. Mehrtash M, Bakker JP, Ayas N. Predictors of continuous positive airway pressure adherence in patients with obstructive sleep apnea. *Lung*. 2019;197(2):115–121. doi:10.1007/s00408-018-00193-1

Dove Medical Press encourages responsible, free and frank academic debate. The content of the International Journal of General Medicine 'letters to the editor' section does not necessarily represent the views of Dove Medical Press, its officers, agents, employees, related entities or the International Journal of General Medicine editors. While all reasonable steps have been taken to confirm the content of each letter, Dove Medical Press accepts no liability in respect of the content of any letter, nor is it responsible for the content and accuracy of any letter to the editor.

## International Journal of General Medicine

Dovepress

### Publish your work in this journal

The International Journal of General Medicine is an international, peer-reviewed open-access journal that focuses on general and internal medicine, pathogenesis, epidemiology, diagnosis, monitoring and treatment protocols. The journal is characterized by the rapid reporting of reviews, original research and clinical studies across all disease areas. The manuscript management system is completely online and includes a very quick and fair peer-review system, which is all easy to use. Visit <http://www.dovepress.com/testimonials.php> to read real quotes from published authors.

Submit your manuscript here: <https://www.dovepress.com/international-journal-of-general-medicine-journal>

<https://doi.org/10.2147/IJGM.S498630>