

Sleep Review[®]
THE JOURNAL FOR SLEEP SPECIALISTS

BEST OF 2013

**SLEEP DOCTORS
& FACILITIES**

Best of 2013: Sleep Doctors & Facilities



Top sleep doctors of today are skilled in more than one area of medicine. They work in collaboration with other medical specialties. They embrace new approaches to diagnosis and treatment of sleep disorders, and their multidimensional approach to sleep medicine enables them to demonstrate positive treatment outcomes. These doctors are people like Jerald H. Simmons, MD, John Tucker, DMD, Douglas Livornese, MD, and Prabhat Soni, MD, sleep professionals represented in *Sleep Review's* Best of 2013 Sleep Doctors and Facilities.

In this supplement, you'll find physicians specializing in diagnostics, such as Jerald H. Simmons, MD, who monitors pressure within the esophagus (Pes) as a routine procedure, allowing more precise identification of respiratory effort. Use of the Pes enables exact diagnosis of frequently missed sleep disorders, such as the upper airway resistance syndrome (UARS). Such techniques help ensure that no diagnosis is missed.

Being at the top of one's profession also involves innovative treatment approaches, such as those being employed by John Tucker, DMD. Tucker, a Diplomate of both the American Board of Dental Sleep Medicine (ABDSM) and the International Congress of Oral Implantologists, sees about 150 patients per week, with 30% receiving treatment related to dental sleep medicine. After being diagnosed with OSA in 2004 and realizing he was CPAP-intolerant, Tucker created his own oral appliance to control his sleep apnea.

Treatment innovations are not the only hallmark of being considered among the best. With the future of medicine in demonstrated outcomes, leading physicians are ahead of the curve in compiling data that identify patients' treatment results. At Comfort Sleep, where Douglas Livornese, MD, is medical director, one of the two owners of the lab developed a software package called DROWZ that enables the lab's staff to provide meaningful follow-up to improve patient CPAP compliance.

The work of top doctors also has far-reaching impact. Prabhat Soni, MD, has managed to spread the message about the importance of sleep and the relationship of sleep apnea to obesity at the local and international level. Soni reaches out to schools near his facility, often giving presentations on OSA and obesity. His message doesn't stop there. Soni also hosts physicians from India to teach them about the clinical and business practice of sleep medicine.

Each one of these medical professionals has a distinct approach to sleep medicine. Their innovative approaches result in exemplary treatment for their patients and provide insight into running a dynamic practice prepared to meet the challenges of the current business climate while providing for the needs of today's sleep disorder patients.

—Franklin A. Holman, fholman@allied360.com

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SLEEP REVIEW'S BEST OF 2013 PROGRAM PANEL

Edward Grandi,
Executive Director,
American Sleep Apnea
Association



Tracy R. Nasca,
Founder and Senior Vice
President of Talk About
Sleep Inc



Adam Amdur,
Chairman, American Sleep
Apnea Association





Jerald H. Simmons, MD

Tackling the Tough Cases

Houston sleep specialist, Jerald H. Simmons, MD, and his team at Comprehensive Sleep Medicine Associates (CSMA) take pride in successfully treating patients who have eluded proper diagnosis elsewhere. By Katie Griffith

Founding director of CSMA, Jerald H. Simmons, MD, is triple board-certified in neurology, sleep medicine and clinical neurophysiology/epilepsy. He trained in neurology at Washington University and sleep at Stanford University where he began implementing technology to improve sleep testing by integrating monitoring the pressure within the esophagus (Pes), which provides more precise identification of respiratory effort. Use of the Pes enables proper diagnosis of frequently missed sleep disorders, such as the upper airway resistance syndrome (UARS). He recognized that a more elaborate analysis of EEG activity is frequently required to assess the brain, beyond what is provided from routine sleep testing. “Seizures can easily be missed using the limited EEG channels on routine sleep testing. I wanted to achieve a higher level of expertise in EEG than what was taught in a sleep fellowship program, so I did an additional fellowship in EEG and epilepsy to complement my skills,” Simmons says.

He initially practiced as a faculty member at UCLA and then founded CSMA, now with several locations throughout Houston, accredited by the American Academy of Sleep Medicine (AASM). Simmons, who is constantly on the cutting edge of sleep medicine, has an integrated delivery model that has not only mastered the treatment of obstructive sleep apnea (OSA), but his team also uses special acclimation protocols such as the PAP-Nap to improve OSA treatment outcomes, which he presented at the 2012 Associated Professional Sleep Societies (APSS) meeting. Simmons established the Sleep Education Consortium, a nonprofit organization that conducts continuing education courses on sleep disorders. The 10th annual conference will be held in January 2014, directed towards dentists and physicians learning in a collaborative meeting on sleep. “I have been directing this conference for years. Interestingly the philosophy I promote at our conference is also what is promoted by the Affordable Care Act, using treatment models that integrate various disciplines within the health care industry. This improves efficiency and patient outcome,” states Simmons.

As an example of his collaborative approach, Simmons works with dentists stabilizing the mandible using dental appliances in some patients, which improves the use of positive airway pressure (PAP) full face masks. This is part of his collaborative team approach. He provides combination therapy with specialized dental appliances attached to PAP masks to patients. Simmons also adds, “Our research demonstrates that many people clench or grind their teeth during sleep, known as sleep bruxism, attempting to keep the airway open and prevent airway obstruction. Over time, this causes destruction to teeth and temporomandibular joint (TMJ) dysfunction, frequently resulting in pain, otherwise known as TMJ disorder. We have demonstrated that treating the

airway diminishes the need to clench and the bruxing stops, thus improving the dental symptoms. Many bruxism patients do not have a detectable degree of obstruction by routine sleep testing, and that is where the use of the Pes is critical for the diagnosis of obstructive breathing.

“We’ve also learned that adding EMG electrodes to monitor clenching of the jaw helps us provide a better assessment of these patients. Now we add these EMG channels to every sleep study,” Simmons educates dentists on this relationship between OSA and TMJ and lectured at the 2012 American Academy of Dental Sleep Medicine, Advanced Sleep Dentistry course. Continuing this comprehensive approach with pediatric patients that have OSA, CSMA works collaboratively with orthodontists who open up the airway orthodontically, eliminating the need for CPAP as the child grows.

Raising the bar in sleep medicine is not just a mantra at CSMA, it can be seen by how the team treats the full range of patients from pediatrics to geriatrics, suffering from conditions such as fibromyalgia, chronic fatigue syndrome, parasomnias, seizures and ADD/ADHD. “Many patients labeled as ADD/ADHD have an underlying sleep disturbance causing their daytime symptoms. We frequently diagnose patients with UARS and/or restless legs as a cause for ADD/ADHD symptoms. By properly diagnosing and treating their sleep, many of these patients can restore their normal daytime functioning without stimulant medications,” says Simmons.

“This is a new field, and most sleep labs mainly focus on OSA; as a result many symptomatic patients go untreated. The field of sleep deserves a much more elaborate approach in order to tackle the more complex cases. We now have patients flying in to Houston from far away in order to get proper care,” states Simmons.

Simmons and his team enhance the level of care and are appropriately recognized as a 2013 Top Sleep Center. If interested in an evaluation or more information, questions can be directed to Comprehensive Sleep Medicine Associates in The Woodlands and Shenandoah at (281) 407-6222, in the Houston Medical Center (713) 668-4100, and in Sugar Land (281) 240-3773. Another way to find out more is to go to the web page at www.HoustonSleep.net where an online sleep questionnaire can be filled out for review. ■

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