

Web Watch

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National Sleep Foundation (NSF) (<http://www.sleepfoundation.org/>)

This site may be important for sleep specialists and primary care physicians with interest in public health and public policy, and patients suffering from sleep disorders. Established in 1990, the National Sleep Foundation (NSF) is a non-profit organization that attempts to enhance and promote better public health knowledge regarding sleep disorders. The website lists its various activities, publications, and opportunities for research. Unique articles relating to public health policy are particularly helpful, as are special articles that concern patients with shift work sleep disorder and sleepy drivers. Material from this site can be printed for use as educational tools during clinical encounters. Links to special patient support and advocacy groups are also helpful.

Vancouver Sleep and Breathing Center (<http://www.sleep-breathing.bc.ca/index.htm>)

This site focuses on the multidisciplinary approach for the treatment of obstructive sleep apnea (OSA). It may be important for sleep physicians who have special interest in the multidisciplinary approach for the treatment of OSA. Dentist, maxillo-facial surgeons, and otolaryngologists may also find this site useful. The site illustrates various therapeutic modalities with color photographs and diagrams. This rather comprehensive site offers the reader background causes of OSA and treatment options.

Nasopharyngoscopy is illustrated nicely. The site uses case studies to effectively explain treatment modalities such as oral appliances and CPAP using dynamic nasopharyngoscopy. Polysomnographic examples are provided to enhance learning and understanding.

Patient-Oriented Books (<http://www.narcolepsy.com/books/booklist.html>)

This useful site provides a list of patient-oriented textbooks on line. Although the title of the site gives the impression that it is narrowly focused on narcolepsy, sleep disorders are addressed more generally. In clinical practice, patients commonly inquire about literature that might provide more in-depth information than can be provided in the office or through patient information booklets. This site may be of particular interest for patients who wish to expand their knowledge about specific sleep disorders. The site is directly linked to Amazon.com, making it easy for patients to order the books.

The browser may find books about drugs for narcolepsy and about other treatment modalities in sleep medicine. A fairly comprehensive list of books dealing with insomnia, jet lag, narcolepsy, sleep disordered breathing, and sleep in children is also included. Clicking on the title provides a description of the book, ratings by other readers, and links to related topics and links to other publications written by the title's author.

APNEA NET (<http://www.apneanet.org/>)

Intended for patients with sleep related breathing disorder, this site contains basic, easy to understand patient-oriented information regarding obstructive sleep apnea. APNEA NET (A, apnea information; P, patients tell their stories; N, news; E, educational; A, awareness; N, new; E, equipment information; and T, treatment alternatives) is fairly comprehensive and offers patient educational material and resources about OSA, news regarding new treatments, and information on equipment options.

As the Internet becomes a more popular resource for patients eager to acquire knowledge about their sleep-related conditions, practitioners will increasingly need to familiarize themselves with information that their patients may be reading. Patients increasingly arrive at clinics carrying multiple printed internet pages about new CPAP masks, dental appliances, and surgical strategies. As clinicians, it may be important that we become familiar with what our patients are reading so that we can be better prepared in providing them with feedback, clarification and support.