

Important Guidance from the American Academy of Pediatrics Regarding Obstructive Sleep Apnea & Related Study at the Down Syndrome Program

The American Academy of Pediatrics now recommends that all people with Down syndrome have at least one sleep study to screen for obstructive sleep apnea (OSA). If your child has not yet had a sleep study, Dr. Skotko and Dr. Davidson will be recommending one during your upcoming clinic visit. In light of that, you may be interested in participating in a new OSA research project in coordination with this appointment. Participation in this research project is optional and will in no way change the clinical care that you receive from our clinic.

Obstructive sleep apnea or OSA is highly prevalent in children and young adults with Down syndrome. Defined as the partial or complete blockage of airflow while sleeping, OSA is associated with a wide range of medical complications, if left untreated. The current method for diagnosing OSA is an overnight sleep study, called a polysomnogram. While noninvasive and highly accurate, sleep studies can be uncomfortable, costly, and inconvenient for both the patient and their family. We would like to change that. So, in conjunction with the Down syndrome program, we are conducting a study to help develop a screening tool that is comfortable, practical, and most importantly, effective for diagnosing OSA in individuals with Down syndrome. Right now, we are inviting all children with Down syndrome ages 3-18, to participate. All participants must be patients who already have a scheduled visit in our Program. As part of the study, all participants will be evaluated for OSA. If you, or someone you know would be interested in learning more, please contact Lauren Voelz (Lauren.Voelz@childrens.harvard.edu) for more information.