

CASE REPORT

Meditative Central Apneas During Lucid Dreaming?

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A 56 year old successful corporate attorney presented to the sleep clinic for many years of witnessed apneas, snort arousals and mild snoring only in the supine position. These came to medical attention now because his wife thought it should be assessed as a relative was recently diagnosed with sleep apnea. He was not sleepy whatsoever, and slept well for eight hours each night. His past medical history was unremarkable. Physical exam revealed a tall, lean and athletic man with a moderately narrow oropharynx due to tongue position. There was some mild erythema on the uvula and soft palate. Otherwise, the exam was normal.

Polysomnography was performed and showed an overall apnea-hypopnea index of three. Disordered breathing events emerged frequently in the supine position. He was instructed to maintain his weight and

recommended positional therapy.

During his return for sleep study results, he remarked that he has had vivid dreams and excellent dream recall since childhood. Furthermore, he was a lucid dreamer and became lucid periodically. During some of the lucid dreams he interacts with relatives who have passed away, such as his father or an uncle. During those conversations he will listen to their words so closely that it becomes a “meditative” or “spiritual” experience as he does not want to miss even a single word they are saying to him. During these periods, he sometimes notices he will “forget to breathe” because of the profound state of relaxation the feeling creates. One of these lucid dreams transpired the night of the polysomnogram. There was a single central apnea during a REM period (figure). It is unknown if his dream occurred during that specific REM period.

REFERENCES

1. Tang H, Sharma N, Whyte KF. Lucid dreaming during Multiple Sleep Latency Test (MSLT). *Sleep Med.* 2006; 7(5):462-3.

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