

MEASUREMENT OF DAYTIME SLEEPINESS BY PATIENTS AND THEIR SPOUSES USING THE EPWORTH SLEEPINESS SCALE

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The Epworth Sleepiness Scale (ESS) has been proposed as a simple method for measuring the general level of daytime sleepiness or the average sleep propensity (ASP) (1,2). This varies between subjects and reflects, among other things, the long-term influence of sleep disorders such as OSA (3). ESS scores are correlated with mean sleep latency in multiple sleep latency tests ($r = -0.46$, $n = 41$, $P < 0.01$). In this investigation the ESS scores of patients and their spouses were compared as independent assessments of the patient's ASP. The subjects were 50 consecutive patients presenting with sleep disorders whose spouse or partner also attended voluntarily. At the end of the consultation, each patient and spouse independently filled out the ESS in another room without discussion, and while under observation. There were 44 male and 6 female patients with ages ranging from 28 to 79 years. Most presented with at least a suspicion of OSA although 2 came for review after successfully using CPAP at home.

The patients' ESS score varied between 2 and 21, their spouses between 3 and 23. The mean ESS score of patients was 13.1 and of spouses was 14.1. This difference was statistically significant (paired t-test, $p < 0.05$) although not very important clinically. The two sets of ESS scores were highly correlated ($r = 0.80$, $p < 0.001$).

A spouse can give an estimate of a patient's ASP that is valid although often slightly higher than the patient's own estimate. That these spouses attended the sleep clinic without being asked to do so reflects their concern for their partner's health and may indicate a tendency to exaggerate their sleepiness.

1. Johns M.W. A new method for measuring daytime sleepiness: The Epworth Sleepiness Scale. *Sleep* 1991; 14:540-545.

2. Johns M.W. Reliability and factor analysis of the Epworth Sleepiness Scale. *Sleep*, 1992; 15:376-381.

3. Johns M.W. Daytime sleepiness, snoring and obstructive sleep apnea. *Chest* 1993 (in press).