

A New Sleep Disorders Unit at Epworth Hospital, Melbourne.

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A new Sleep Disorders Unit is currently being established at Epworth Hospital, a long-established private hospital in Melbourne. The new Unit will provide a much-needed clinical service in Melbourne where facilities for the investigation of various sleep disorders have hitherto been very limited. Some research will be possible on the results obtained. The Unit will be funded by patients' fees.

Initially the Unit will have two recording rooms, with the possibility of increasing this to eight if required. A feature of the Unit is its digital recording and analysis system, developed especially for this purpose in Melbourne. This powerful computer system uses multiple computer processors for controlling all the preamplifiers and filters, for digitizing the data on 48 channels (upgradable to 96 channels), recording the data on hard disc and long-term tape, and displaying on-line not only the raw data but also the results of computer analysis for each channel. All the usual parameters measured in a fully-equipped sleep laboratory are included, and there is closed-circuit television with invisible infra-red light. In addition, some new techniques are being developed for recording the sleeper's position in bed and for distinguishing various laryngeal noises, whether from normal breathing, snoring, swallowing, etc. A CPAP air-line is available in each room.

Patients will be treated by specialists appropriate for their diagnoses, whether by a respiratory physician, ENT surgeon, neurologist, psychiatrist, psychologist, endocrinologist or sleep physiologist.

The Epworth Sleep Disorders Unit will accept its first patients in the next few weeks.