Habitual snoring, risk factors and symptoms in primary school children

Guerrero A1, Urschitz MS1,2, Eggebrek E1, Urschitz-Duprat PM1, Schlaud M1, Peits CP1,4
1 Department of Pediatric Pulmonology and Neonatology, Hannover Medical School, Hannover, Germany
2 Department of Epidemiology, Social Medicine and Health System Research, Hannover Medical School, Hannover, Germany
3 Division of Neonatology, Department of Pediatrics, Vienna General Hospital, University of Vienna, Vienna, Austria
4 Department of Neonatology, University of Tuebingen, Tuebingen, Germany

BACKGROUND
Habitual snoring (HS) is associated with restless sleep, daytime sleepiness, and hyperactive and aggressive behavior in pre-school children1. Population-based data of symptoms associated with HS in school children are rare. Aim of this study was to obtain the prevalence of habitual snoring in primary school children and to establish associated risk factors and symptoms.

METHODS
• As part of a population-based, cross-sectional study on the prevalence of sleep-disordered breathing (SDB) in primary school children, all children attending the third grade of 27 randomly selected regular primary schools located in Hannover, Germany, were asked to participate.
• Parents were given a 25-item questionnaire concerning signs and symptoms of SDB (e.g., snoring, observed apneas, difficulty breathing during sleep), frequent sleep problems (e.g., sleep onset delays, frequent night wakings, nightmares, sleep walking, enuresis), daytime symptoms (e.g., hyperactivity, concentration deficits, daytime tiredness and sleepiness), health status (e.g., allergies, morning headaches, daytime mouth breathing, sore throat, frequency of infections [i.e., rhinitis, bronchitis, otitis media], history of adenoidectomy and tonsillectomy), and personal factors (e.g., gender, age, weight, height, parental education and smoking).

RESULTS
• Snoring was investigated with the question “Does your child snore?” and was rated on a 4-point scale (i.e., “never”, “occasionally”, “frequently” or “always”). HS was defined as snoring frequently or always.
• The remaining questions were rated on a 3-point scale (i.e., “rarely”, “occasionally” or “frequently”).
• Odds ratios (OR) and their 95% confidence intervals (95%CI) were calculated using unconditional logistic regression. Adjustments were made for gender, age, and parental education.

RESULTS
• Of 1144 (65%) questionnaires returned, 585 (51%) were from boys.
• Information on snoring was available for 1129 children (98.7%). Four-hundred-ten children (36.3%) never snored, 605 (53.6%) occasionally snored, and 114 children (10.1%) were reported to snore habitually; one hundred-ten children (36.3%) never snored, 605 (53.6%) occasionally snored, and 114 children (10.1%) were reported to snore habitually; one third of these snored loudly or extremely loudly.
• Risk factors: HS was significantly associated with frequent daytime mouth breathing, frequent infections, allergic/chronic rhinitis, a history of adenoidectomy, obesity (i.e., BMI >90th centile), and parental smoking of >10 cigarettes/day. Logistic regression analysis revealed frequent infections and mouth breathing as the most important risk factors of HS (Table 1).

Symptoms of occasional and habitual snoring

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Risk factors</th>
<th>Hyperactivity</th>
<th>Nightmares</th>
<th>Concentration deficit</th>
<th>Daytime sleepiness</th>
<th>Daytime tiredness</th>
<th>Morning headaches</th>
<th>Sore throat</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>HS</td>
<td>NS</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Table 1. Prevalence and adjusted odds ratios of various symptoms according to snoring categories. Abbreviations: NS: never snoring; HS: habitual snoring; OR: odds ratio; CI: confidence interval.

Risk factors of habitual snoring

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Risk factor</th>
<th>Definition</th>
<th>n</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>OR</th>
<th>95%CI</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>History of adenoidectomy</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>18.7</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>30.6</td>
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<tr>
<td>Parental smoking</td>
<td>&gt;10 cig/day</td>
<td>266</td>
<td>2.4</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>39.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BMI</td>
<td>&gt; 90th centile</td>
<td>265</td>
<td>26.1</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>42.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Allergic chronic rhinitis</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>8.1</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>15.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frequent infections</td>
<td>&gt;3/day</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>3.7</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>17.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mouth breathing</td>
<td>frequently</td>
<td>146</td>
<td>14.8</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>50.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2. Prevalence and adjusted odds ratios of various risk factors according to snoring categories. Abbreviations: NS: never snoring; OS: occasional snoring; HS: habitual snoring; OR: odds ratio; CI: confidence interval.

CONCLUSION
• Similar to pre-school children, HS was associated with increased daytime sleepiness, tiredness, hyperactivity and concentration deficits in these primary school children. This might have an influence on the school performance of these children.
• In addition, we found obesity, signs of adenotonsillar hypertrophy (daytime mouth breathing), history of adenoidectomy, frequent infections of the upper respiratory tract, allergic/chronic rhinitis and parental smoking of >10 cigarettes/day as risk factors of HS in these primary school children.

References

Fig. 1