



Title	A Review of Guidelines for Referral of Patients to Sleep Laboratories
Agency	CADTH, Canadian Agency for Drugs and Technologies in Health Suite 600, 865 Carling Ave, Ottawa, ON K1S 5S8, Canada; Tel: +1 613 226 2553, Fax: +1 613 226 5392; publications@cadth.ca, www.cadth.ca
Reference	CADTH Technology Report, Issue 55, May 2005. ISBN 1-894978-65-X (print), 1-894978-64-1 (electronic). Full text available at www.cadth.ca/media/pdf/183_sleeplabs_tr_e.pdf

Aim

To identify recommendations presented in guidelines by professional bodies that address the investigation of individuals in sleep laboratories; and to review the nature, quality, and relevance of the evidence cited in support of these recommendations.

Conclusions and results

Thirty-seven guidelines and associated reviews covering the following applications of sleep laboratory investigation were identified: obstructive sleep apnea (diagnosis, titration, and followup); other respiratory disorders; chronic lung disease; obstructive sleep apnea, repeat PSG, and other conditions in children; sudden infant death syndrome; treatment for snoring; insomnia; depression with insomnia; narcolepsy; restless legs syndrome; and parasomnias. Of the 81 recommendations identified, 46 are supported by evidence from primary studies, 4 are supported by an absence of available evidence, and 31 have no evidence or are supported by consensus. The cited evidence from the primary studies was judged to be highly relevant to the recommendation in 18 cases, of some relevance in 22 cases, and of little or no relevance in 6 cases. The level of evidence for many applications is of limited quality and some cited studies are not relevant to the recommendations made. Many recommendations reflect consensus positions, and no evidence is cited in support. Further good quality studies are needed concerning many sleep laboratory applications.

Recommendations

Not applicable.

Methods

Electronic databases were searched for guidelines and associated reviews, which appeared from 1992 onwards, on the use of sleep laboratory investigations for sleep disorders. The searches were not limited to the English language and were updated periodically. Guidelines and associated reviews were selected, and recommendations related to the selection of patients for examination in

sleep laboratories were identified. Publications cited in support of the recommendations were reviewed considering the type and design of the study, population, and quality and relevance of the evidence. For each sleep laboratory application, pertinent guideline recommendations were listed and the studies cited in support were reviewed. The quality and relevance of evidence in support of recommendations were rated on 3-point scales.

Further research/reviews required

Further good quality studies of many sleep laboratory applications are needed.