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## Treating Sleep Apnea Could Save Lives, Money

Auto accidents involving people with untreated obstructive sleep apnea cause 1,400 deaths in the year 2000 and nearly \$16 billion in accident-related costs, report researchers from the University of California, San Diego.

While treatment for the condition is readily available, many people with OSA aren't receiving the treatment.

The current study estimated lives lost and accident costs by analyzing medical research data from 1980 to 2003. "Qualitatively, the scientific community has known for approximately 20 years that sleep apnea increases the risk for automobile crashes," said study author Alex Sassani, MD. "This is the first study to quantify the impact of obstructive sleep apnea on society, which is quite significant."

In the United States, treating all drivers suffering from OSA with CPAP would cost \$3.18 billion, save \$11.1 billion in collision costs, and save 980 lives annually, they conclude.

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