

Updated recommendations for polysomnography during CoVID-19 pandemic: a plan for reopening.

5 May 2020

Preamble

To date, Australia and New Zealand have a relatively light burden of disease related to CoVID-19 compared to other countries. It is therefore timely to turn our focus to the question of how best to restore sleep services and plan for the future given that CoVID-19 is likely to be endemic in Australia and New Zealand for some time to come. We need to carefully balance the community need to access sleep services to maintain health against the need to minimize community transmission and protect staff.

Laboratory sleep studies (Level 1)

The current low rates of community transmission of CoVID-19 in Australia and New Zealand and the easing of restrictions regarding elective surgery in Australia means that Level 1 diagnostic polysomnography may recommence for adult and children. It is vitally important to comply with the current government and hospital guidelines for infection control measures, physical distancing in public areas and for 25% capacity testing where indicated as per government requirements*. Cleaning and disinfection guidelines from equipment manufacturers should be strictly adhered to during this time.

- **The ASA recommends Level 1 diagnostic sleep studies be performed with pre-screening of patients (epidemiological risk factors, symptoms as per the latest government guidelines) and body temperature check to ensure they have no symptoms of a viral illness and are afebrile prior to testing. Patients should be prioritised based on the most urgent clinical need. Compliance with reduced capacity testing where indicated (25% as per current Australian government requirements*) is strongly recommended. It is recommended that vigilance testing may be performed providing the previous infection control and reduced capacity guidelines are met.**
- **At this stage, the ASA recommends that Level 1 treatment studies including CPAP and NIV should not commence, although this will be subject to frequent review. It is expected that these may be able to recommence in the near future, depending on community rates of transmission and after further consideration of operational and infection control issues.**

Home sleep studies (Level 2)

Remote set up for level 2 testing may continue however this is not possible for all patients and laboratories. Due to reduced community transmission of CoVID-19 and the easing of restrictions regarding elective surgery in Australia, Level 2 studies with face to face set up may recommence. Similar, to Level 1 diagnostic studies, it is important to comply with current government and hospital guidelines for infection control measures, physical distancing in public areas and for 25% capacity testing as per government requirements*, where indicated.

- **The ASA recommends diagnostic home sleep studies with face to face set up can be performed with pre-screening of patients (epidemiological risk factors, symptoms as per the latest government guidelines) and body temperature check to ensure they have no symptoms of a viral illness and are afebrile prior to testing. Patients should be prioritised based on the most urgent clinical need. Compliance with reduced capacity testing (25% as per current Australian government requirements*) is strongly recommended.**

Home sleep studies (Level 2 for children, Levels 3 and 4 for children and adults)

The ASA submission to the Health Minister is still under consideration.

* In Australia there are currently Federal restrictions in place on the number of elective procedures that can be performed (25% capacity is suggested). Each state and hospital have guidelines on how to interpret this reduced capacity. It would be prudent for all sleep services to comply with government and hospital requirements regarding capacity of testing.

This is due for review by National Cabinet on May 11th, 2020.

<https://www.health.gov.au/news/government-eases-elective-surgery-restrictions>