



"Phrenic Nerve Pacing for Central Sleep Apnea"



Richard Shepard, MD
Associate Professor of Medicine, VCU Health Pauley Heart Center

Educational Objectives:

- What are the different treatments for central and obstructive sleep apnea?
- What are cardiac issues associated with sleep apnea?
- What are effective treatments for central sleep apnea?

October 10, 2025

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Central Sleep Apnea and Phrenic Nerve Pacing

Richard K Shepard MD
Associate Professor of Medicine
VCU Pauley Heart Center
VCU Health

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Disclosures

- None to report
- I am an implanter of the Respicardia Remede sleep apnea device but have no financial interest. (now owned by Zoll)
- I participated in the original Pivotal clinical trials for Respicardia.
- I am not a sleep doctor.

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What is this?

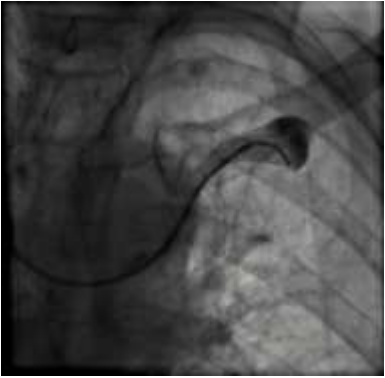


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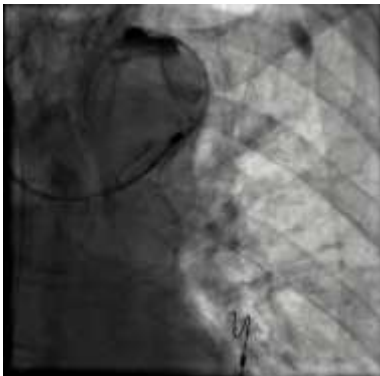
First remede Phrenic Nerve stimulator implant at VCU health
Done in 2014 as part of Pivotal trial.
Implanters were chosen for expertise in BiV ICD CS lead implantation.

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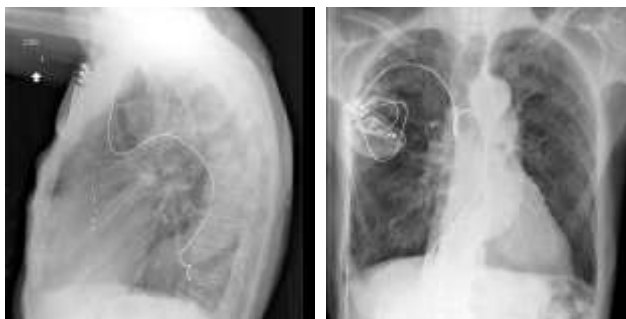
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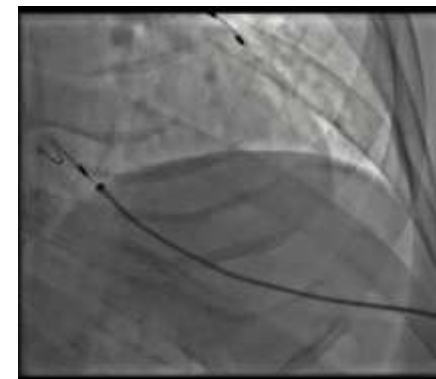
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Outline:

- Sleep Apnea
- Brief discussion of Obstructive Sleep Apnea
- Cardiovascular problems with Sleep Apnea
- Central Sleep Apnea and Treatment

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Sleep Apnea: Many cardiovascular effects

Hypoxia and sympathetic activity surges:

- Hypertension
- Increased preload
- Increased afterload

Promotes myocardial ischemia and arrhythmia

- Enhances oxidative stress
- Endothelial dysfunction
- Inflammation
- Activates neurohormonal system --> progression of disease

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AHI Apnea-hypopnea Index

- The apnea-hypopnea index is the combined average number of apneas and hypopneas that occur per hour of sleep.
- American Academy of Sleep Medicine categorized as
 - Mild 5 -15 events per hour
 - Moderate 15 -30 events per hour
 - Severe > 30 events per hour

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Table 2—Patients at High Risk for OSA Who Should Be Evaluated for OSA Symptoms

- Obesity (BMI > 35)
- Congestive heart failure
- Atrial fibrillation
- Treatment refractory hypertension
- Type 2 diabetes
- Nocturnal dysrhythmias
- Stroke
- Pulmonary hypertension
- High-risk driving populations
- Preoperative for bariatric surgery

Journal of Clinical Sleep Medicine, Vol 5, No 3, 2009

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CPAP is very effective for treatment Obstructive Sleep Apnea

It is only effective when used greater than 4 hours per night

29 % to 83% of patients have been non adherent if various studies

Therefore, many surgical options are now available
Which may have led to thought of surgical treatment for CSA

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Operative Techniques in Otolaryngology-Head and Neck Surgery

Volume 21, Issue 3, September 2012, Pages 227-233

Original contribution

Operative technique of upper airway stimulation: an implantable treatment of obstructive sleep apnea

Joachim T. Maurer MD,*¹, Paul Van de Heyning MD, PhD,², Ho-Sheng Lin MD,*³, Jonathan Baskin MD,⁴, Clemens Anders MD,⁵, Winfried Hohenhorst MD,⁶, B. Tucker Woodson MD⁷

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Operative Techniques in Otolaryngology, Vol 23, No 3, September 2012

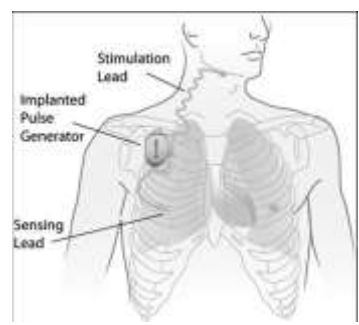


Figure 1. Schematic drawing of the Inspire upper airway stimulation (UAS) system. The implantable pulse generator (IPG) delivers electric pulses through a stimulation lead to the hypoglossal nerve synchronous with respiratory cycles detected by a sensing lead

Operative Techniques in Otolaryngology, Vol 23, No 3, September 2012

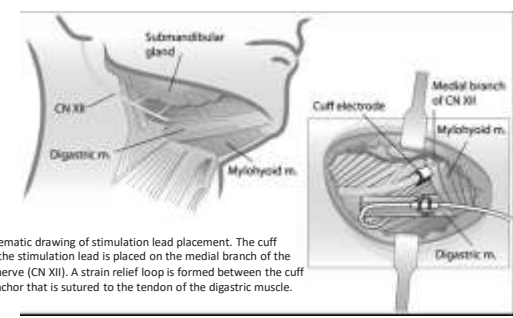


Figure 4. Schematic drawing of stimulation lead placement. The cuff electrode of the stimulation lead is placed on the medial branch of the hypoglossal nerve (CN XII). A strain relief loop is formed between the cuff and a lead anchor that is sutured to the tendon of the digastric muscle.

Operative Techniques in Otolaryngology, Vol 23, No 3, September 2012

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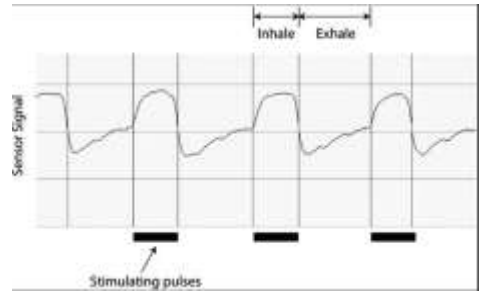
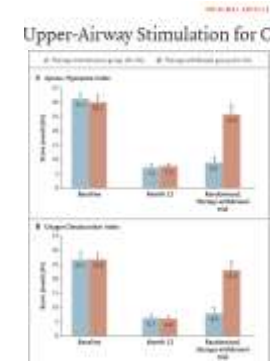


Figure 6. Inspire UAS stimulation timing. Stimulation pulses start when the patient begins to inhale and stop when the patient begins to exhale. The timing of the synchronization can be adjusted by sensing parameters.

Operative Techniques in Otolaryngology, Vol 23, No 3, September 2012

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Upper-Airway Stimulation for Obstructive Sleep Apnea
N Engl J Med 2014; 370:133-143
DOI: 10.1056/NEJMoa1301129

Significant reduction in AHI with Inspire sleep apnea device after 12 months of therapy.
Benefits only remain with maintenance of therapy.

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Central Sleep Apnea in the Cardiovascular Patient Population

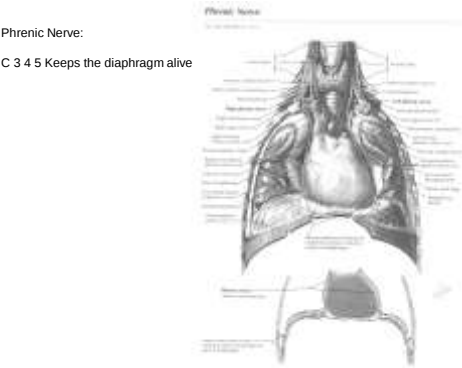
Central Sleep Apnea

- Central sleep apnea results from an *intermittent neural drive* to breathe
- Patients with co-morbidities such as heart failure, atrial fibrillation and renal disease are at *increased risk* for CSA



Codano, et al. J Am Coll Cardiol 2015;65:72-84

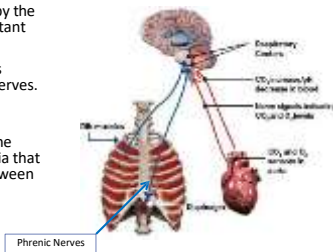
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Pathophysiology of Central Sleep Apnea

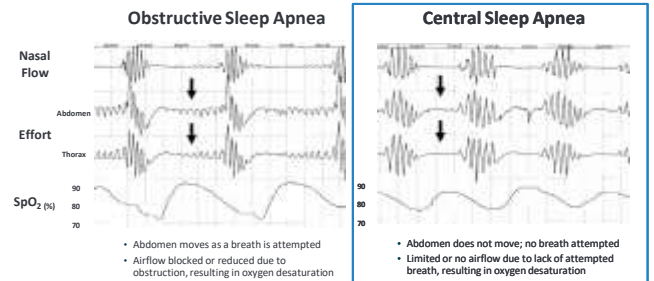
During sleep, respiration is regulated by the brain whose goal is to maintain a constant blood CO₂.
To keep CO₂ regulated, the brain sends signals to the diaphragm via phrenic nerves. These signals control the pattern of breathing.
In patients with central sleep apnea, the brain develops a respiratory arrhythmia that manifests as an oscillating pattern between hyperventilation and apnea



Benjamin et al. Physiol Rev 2015;95:1-12
Or et al. Respirology 2017;22:424-32

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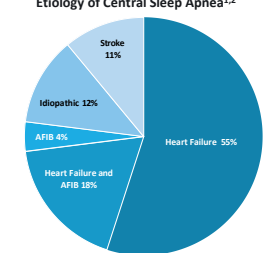
The difference between OSA and CSA is evident in sleep studies



Pham, et al High Alt Med Biol 2017; 18: 11-19

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Most patients with CSA also have concomitant cardiovascular conditions

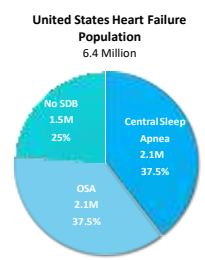


- Heart Failure^{2,3}**
 - CSA occurs in 30–50% of patients with heart failure with reduced left ventricular ejection fraction (LVEF) and in 18–30% of HF patients with preserved LVEF
 - 70%+ of CSA patients have heart failure and/or reduced left ventricular ejection fraction (LVEF)
- Atrial Fibrillation^{2,4,5}**
 - CSA occurs in 10–30% of patients with atrial fibrillation
 - 20%+ of CSA patients have atrial fibrillation

1. Benard and Shapiro, Comprehensive Physiology 2012;3:461-482.
2. Ouyang et al. Circulation 2015;131:1001-1008.
3. Benard and Shapiro, Comprehensive Physiology 2012;3:461-482.
4. Tang et al. J Am Heart Assoc 2017;6:e016008 (doi:10.1161/JAHA.116.034000).
5. Benard et al. Am J Respir Crit Care Med 2010;181:1001-1008.

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Sleep Disordered Breathing is Common in Heart Failure
Untreated CSA symptoms can overlap HF symptoms



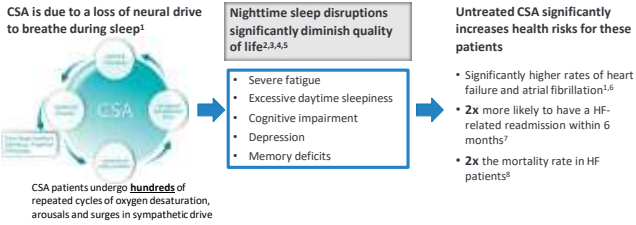
Rege et al. Circulation 2011;123:e48-58
Gottlieb et al. Am J Respir Crit Care Med 2007;175:1262-1267

- Many patients with CSA complain of symptoms which may be multifactorial:
 - Fatigue
 - Low cardiac index
 - Medication side-effects
 - Depression
 - Co-existent medical problems
 - Frequent hospitalizations
 - Nocturia
 - Frequent awakenings
- CSA patients often have apneas observed by bed partners
- CSA patients frequently do not snore
- CSA patients frequently are not aware that they have arousals

Gottlieb et al. JACC 2012;60:1717-1724
Rege et al. JACC 2012;60:1717-1724

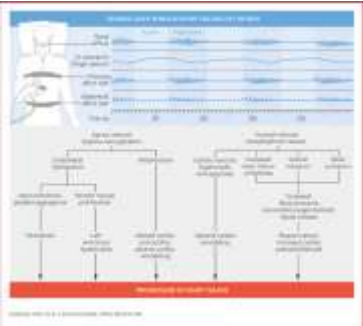
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Untreated CSA causes life altering levels of fatigue as well as increased health risks for heart failure and atrial fibrillation



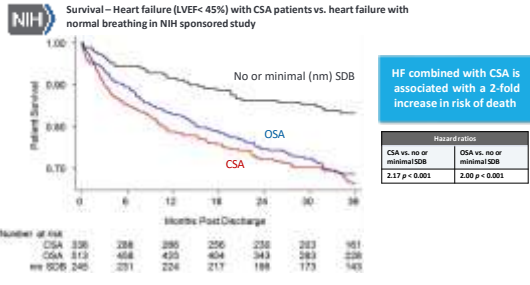
1. Hoffstein V, Mateika JK, Mateika JK. *Am Rev Respir Dis*. 1999; 159:1501-1510.
2. Mateika JK, Mateika JK. *Am Rev Respir Dis*. 1999; 159:1501-1510.
3. Mateika JK, Mateika JK. *Am Rev Respir Dis*. 1999; 159:1501-1510.
4. Mateika JK, Mateika JK. *Am Rev Respir Dis*. 1999; 159:1501-1510.
5. Mateika JK, Mateika JK. *Am Rev Respir Dis*. 1999; 159:1501-1510.
6. Mateika JK, Mateika JK. *Am Rev Respir Dis*. 1999; 159:1501-1510.
7. Mateika JK, Mateika JK. *Am Rev Respir Dis*. 1999; 159:1501-1510.
8. Mateika JK, Mateika JK. *Am Rev Respir Dis*. 1999; 159:1501-1510.

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Sleep Disordered Breathing is a Predictor of Mortality in HF Patients



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Limited Treatment Options for Central Sleep Apnea

CPAP	- Most common CSA treatment - Clinical trials demonstrated improvement in AHI and EF - CANPAP showed no improvement in QoL or M&M and was stopped early for safety - Does not have a FDA approved indication to treat CSA
ASV (Adaptive servo-ventilation)	- Largest randomized study in CSA (SERVE-HF n=1325) - Showed an improvement in AHI but no improvement in QoL - No difference in M&M, but increased cardiovascular mortality in patients with EF < 45% Black box warning and Class III recommendation against use in patients with EF < 45%
Oxygen Therapy	- Small randomized studies show improvement in AHI, but no improvements in arousals or daytime sleepiness - Does not have a FDA approved indication to treat CSA
Medications - Theophylline - Acetazolamide	- Both studied in short (<3 month) studies with < 20 patients - Does not have a FDA approved indication to treat CSA

1. Mateika JK, Mateika JK. *Am Rev Respir Dis*. 1999; 159:1501-1510.
2. Mateika JK, Mateika JK. *Am Rev Respir Dis*. 1999; 159:1501-1510.
3. Mateika JK, Mateika JK. *Am Rev Respir Dis*. 1999; 159:1501-1510.
4. Mateika JK, Mateika JK. *Am Rev Respir Dis*. 1999; 159:1501-1510.
5. Mateika JK, Mateika JK. *Am Rev Respir Dis*. 1999; 159:1501-1510.
6. Mateika JK, Mateika JK. *Am Rev Respir Dis*. 1999; 159:1501-1510.
7. Mateika JK, Mateika JK. *Am Rev Respir Dis*. 1999; 159:1501-1510.
8. Mateika JK, Mateika JK. *Am Rev Respir Dis*. 1999; 159:1501-1510.

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Positive airway pressure (PAP) devices are frequently prescribed for CSA despite limited effectiveness data, as well as compliance and tolerance issues

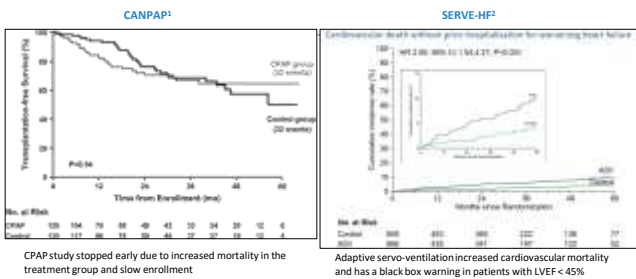


- Positive airway pressure therapies have been shown to reduce AHI but have not shown improvements in arousals, REM Sleep or quality of life in a randomized clinical trial¹
- Many patients are unable to tolerate PAP due to a range of challenges:²
 - Mask discomfort
 - Mask leakage
 - Pressure intolerance
 - Skin irritation
 - Nasal congestion
 - Nasal drying
 - Nosebleeds
 - Claustrophobia
 - Bed partner disruption
 - Challenge to intimacy
- 25-50% of patients refuse or are unable to tolerate these therapies^{3,4}
- 40-60% are non-compliant to even a minimal bar of 4 hours/night, 5 nights/week^{3,4}
- Randomized clinical trials have also revealed safety concerns for PAP therapies in patients with reduced left ventricular ejection fraction (LVEF)⁵

1. Mateika JK, Mateika JK. *Am Rev Respir Dis*. 1999; 159:1501-1510.
2. Mateika JK, Mateika JK. *Am Rev Respir Dis*. 1999; 159:1501-1510.
3. Mateika JK, Mateika JK. *Am Rev Respir Dis*. 1999; 159:1501-1510.
4. Mateika JK, Mateika JK. *Am Rev Respir Dis*. 1999; 159:1501-1510.
5. Mateika JK, Mateika JK. *Am Rev Respir Dis*. 1999; 159:1501-1510.

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Positive airway pressure therapies have failed to meet their clinical endpoints



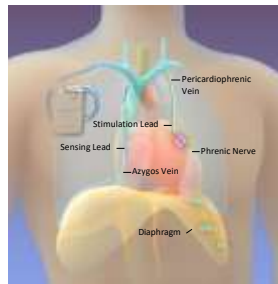
CANPAP study stopped early due to increased mortality in the treatment group and slow enrollment

Adaptive servo-ventilation increased cardiovascular mortality and has a black box warning in patients with LVEF < 45%

1. Mateika JK, Mateika JK. *Am Rev Respir Dis*. 1999; 159:1501-1510.
2. Mateika JK, Mateika JK. *Am Rev Respir Dis*. 1999; 159:1501-1510.

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Transvenous phrenic nerve stimulation with the remedē® System



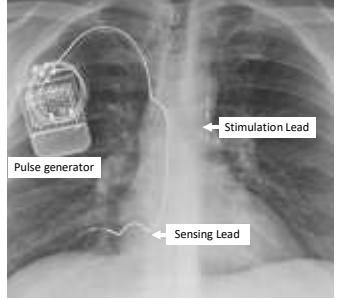
- **Fully implantable system** with an indication to treat moderate to severe central sleep apnea in adults; received U.S. FDA PMA approval October 2017
- **Stabilizes breathing** by activating the diaphragm to generate negative pressure in the chest (similar to natural breathing)
- **Turns on automatically at night**, ensuring nightly compliance and adherence over time
- Implanted by cardiac electrophysiologists (EPs)
 - **Pulse generator** implanted below clavicle
 - **Stimulation lead** placed either in left pericardiophrenic or right brachiocephalic vein
 - **Sensing lead** placed in the Azygos vein, helps optimize therapy (optional)

1. FDA Approved Summary of Safety and Effectiveness Data (SSED) for the remedē® System and The remedē System Implant and Clinician Use Manual (P160039) Oct. 6, 2017.

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The remedē® System implanted



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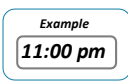
Courtesy Respicardia, Inc.

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remedē System therapy activates automatically each night

Therapy is delivered when...

It is within the pre-programmed sleeping hours...



...AND the patient is reclined past the programmed sleeping angle...



...AND the patient is not moving



Therapy is paused when...

The patient sits up...



...OR the patient moves

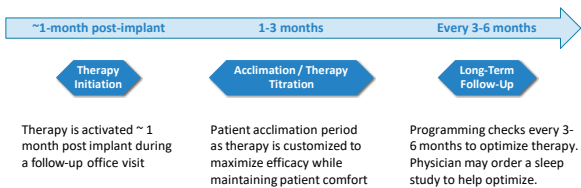


Therapy resumes a few minutes after the patient returns to a reclined position and is once again still

Courtesy Respicardia, Inc.

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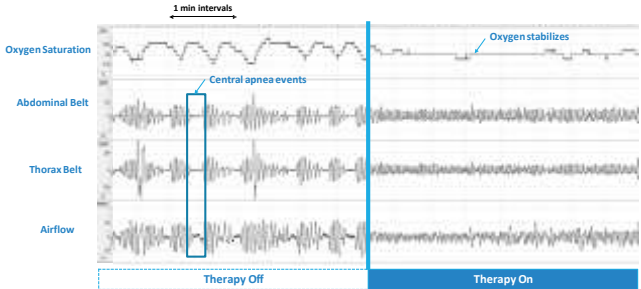
remedē® System therapy – recommended programming and follow-up



Courtesy Respicardia, Inc.

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Breathing stabilizes and apnea events are significantly reduced when phrenic nerve stimulation is being delivered¹



1. Costantino MR, et al. J Card Fail. 2025;21:880-902

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To demonstrate safety and efficacy and gain FDA approval, Respicardia has evaluated phrenic nerve stimulation for the treatment of CSA in 275+ patients across multiple trials



Safety Study	4 Subjects
Proof of Concept	10 Subjects
Lead and Algorithm Development	41 Subjects
Acute Feasibility (Control Night vs Therapy Night)	16 Subjects
Chronic Safety Study	8 Implanted Subjects
Pilot Study - Chronic Feasibility	49 Implanted Subjects
Pivotal Trial – IDE Study	147 Implanted Subjects

- The pivotal trial is the largest randomized trial thus far in CSA patients to meet its endpoints and show benefit
- All chronic studies have shown consistent improvements in sleep metrics and quality of life

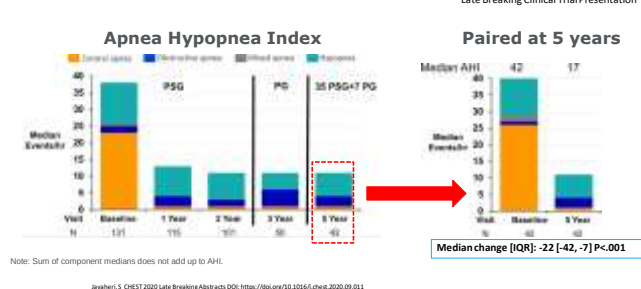
Abraham et al. JCHF 2014;10:368-376
Costantino et al. J Card Fail 2025;21:880-902
Costantino et al. The Lancet 2024;398:1819-30
Costantino et al. Am J Cardiol 2024;152:1405-1408
Nguyen et al. Sci Rep 2023;13:22020-22020. 13:1402/2023/13:22020

Parksweli et al. Eur Heart J 2023;44:1811-1815
Zhang et al. Clin Respir J 2023;17:1112-1120
Zhang et al. Chest 2023;162:1427-1436
PMA FDA Summary of Safety and Effectiveness Data, PMA P160039

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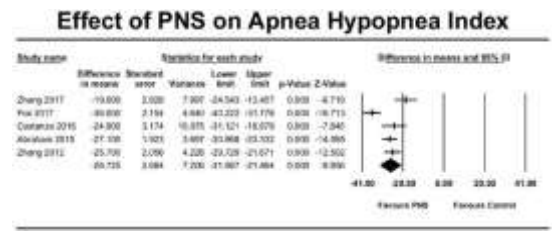
Cozzano MR, et al., The Lancet 2016;388:974-82

Sustained Improvement in Sleep Disordered Breathing



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Consistent AHI reduction with phrenic nerve stimulation across multiple studies



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In heart failure, CSA can accelerate cardiac disease progression

Reciprocal Interaction between CSA and Heart Failure



Central Sleep Apnea

Heart Failure

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ESC
European Society of Cardiology

European Journal of Heart Failure 2019; 21: 1796–1798

RESEARCH ARTICLE

Phrenic nerve stimulation to treat patients with central sleep apnoea and heart failure

Maria Rosa Costanzo^{1,2}, Piotr Perlejewski¹, Andrew Costa³, Shahrosh Javaheri⁴, Ralph Augoustides⁵, Lee R. Goldberg⁶, Richard Holcomb⁷, Andrew Kao⁸, Rami M. Khayat⁹, Giora Didenburg¹⁰, Christoph Seifriedinger¹¹, Scott McKenney¹², and William T. Abraham¹, for the REMOTE[®] System Pivotal Trial Study Group

¹University of Maryland, Baltimore, Baltimore, MD, USA; ²Medical University of Vienna, Vienna, Austria; ³University of Colorado, Denver, CO, USA; ⁴The Ohio State University, Columbus, OH, USA; ⁵University of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia, PA, USA; ⁶University of Washington, Seattle, WA, USA; ⁷University of Texas at Dallas, Dallas, TX, USA; ⁸University of California, San Francisco, CA, USA; ⁹University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, MI, USA; ¹⁰University of Illinois at Chicago, Chicago, IL, USA; ¹¹University of Cologne, Cologne, Germany; ¹²University of Texas at San Antonio, San Antonio, TX, USA

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Table 2 Changes in quality of life in the pooled heart failure population

	Baseline observed		4-month active therapy		12-month active therapy	
	Observed	Paired change from baseline	Observed	Paired change from baseline	Observed	Paired change from baseline
Medians in marked improvement in RGA	N/A	N/A	10 (100)	N/A	50 (100)	N/A
European Respiratory Society	8.7 ± 1.1 (SD)	8.3 ± 1.1 (SD)	-1.2 ± 0.2 (SE)	6.1 ± 0.7 (SE)	-0.7 ± 0.2 (SE)	
Spinal Stimulation Score ^a	8.0 [3.6–11.0]	6.8 [3.0–9.0]	-1.0 [-1.0 to 0.0]	3.0 [0.0–6.0]	-2.0 [-1.0 to 0.0]	
			P = 0.001		P = 0.001	
Minnesota Living with Heart Failure score ^b	39.2 ± 22.8 (SD)	31.9 ± 24.1 (SD)	-1.2 ± 19.1 (SE)	31.0 ± 22.9 (SD)	-4.0 ± 18.8 (SE)	
	40.0 [3.0–55.0]	33.0 [9.0–52.0]	-1.0 [-1.0 to 0.0]	37.0 [10.0–46.0]	-4.0 [-1.0 to 0.0]	
			P = 0.027		P = 0.000	

^aValues are mean ± standard deviation (SD), or median (interquartile range) for non-normal data; n = 5 (4/5) for subgroup data.

^bValues are median (interquartile range).

^cValues are median (interquartile range).

^dValues are median (interquartile range).

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Table 4 Changes in echocardiographic parameters in the pooled heart failure population

	Baseline observed		4-month active therapy		12-month active therapy	
	Observed	Paired change from baseline	Observed	Paired change from baseline	Observed	Paired change from baseline
Left ventricular ejection fraction (%)	37.8 ± 8.5 (SD)	37.2 ± 7.7 (SD)	38.0 ± 8.5 (SD)	38.0 ± 8.5 (SD)	38.0 ± 8.5 (SD)	
	37.8 [16.0–39.0]	37.2 [16.0–39.0]	38.0 [16.0–39.0]	38.0 [16.0–39.0]	38.0 [16.0–39.0]	
			P = 0.000		P = 0.000	
Left ventricular end-diastolic volume (mL)	159.7 ± 44.8 (SD)	159.7 ± 44.8 (SD)	159.7 ± 44.8 (SD)	159.7 ± 44.8 (SD)	159.7 ± 44.8 (SD)	
	159.7 [100–159.7]	159.7 [100–159.7]	159.7 [100–159.7]	159.7 [100–159.7]	159.7 [100–159.7]	
			P = 0.000		P = 0.000	
Left ventricular end-systolic volume (mL)	149.3 ± 41.7 (SD)	149.3 ± 41.7 (SD)	149.3 ± 41.7 (SD)	149.3 ± 41.7 (SD)	149.3 ± 41.7 (SD)	
	149.3 [100–149.3]	149.3 [100–149.3]	149.3 [100–149.3]	149.3 [100–149.3]	149.3 [100–149.3]	
			P = 0.000		P = 0.000	

^aValues are mean ± standard deviation (SD), or median (interquartile range).

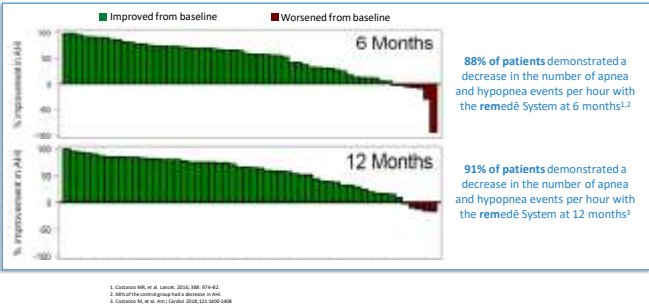
^bValues are median (interquartile range).

^cValues are median (interquartile range).

^dValues are median (interquartile range).

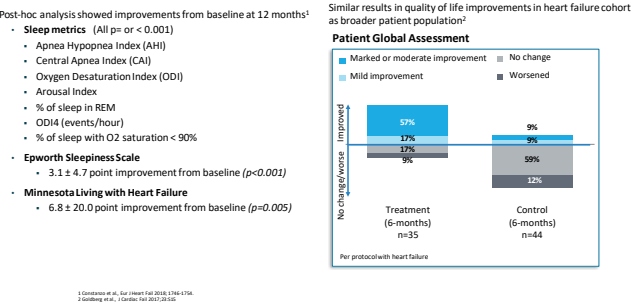
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The majority of treated patients demonstrated a decrease in AHI at 6 months and again at 12 months



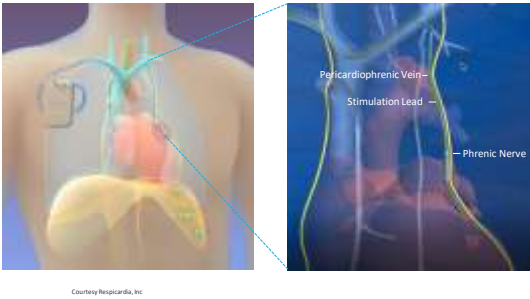
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Post hoc analysis of the heart failure cohort demonstrated similar benefit in sleep and quality of life



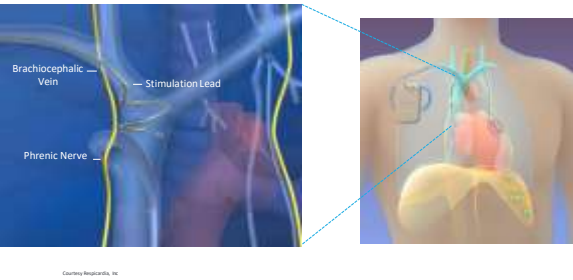
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The remedē System – left stimulation lead placement



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The remedē System – right stimulation lead placement



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Combined Central and Obstructive Sleep Apnea

- The Remede and Inspire system can work together
- The remedē initiates diaphragmatic breathing
- The Inspire senses the diaphragm then opens the airway.
- About 15 combined implant in USA

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Respircardia and Inspire Device working together



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VCU remede phrenic nerve stimulator cases:

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Internal Thoracic Vein



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Pericardiophrenic Vein



Wire down pericardiophrenic vein



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Phrenic Nerve Stimulation test
With strong response.



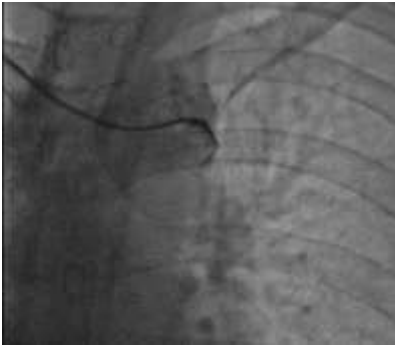
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Final site of Repicardia lead in
pericardiophrenic vein

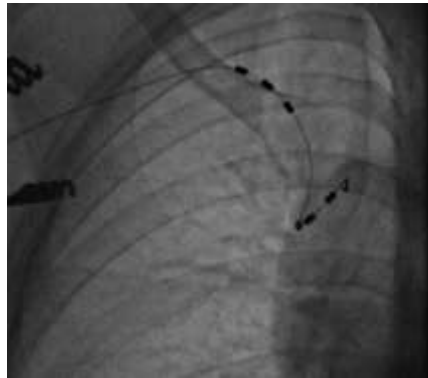


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Atretic
pericardiophrenic
vein



66



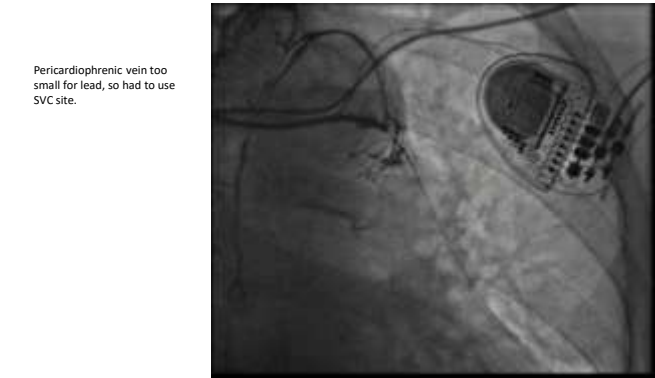
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BiV pacing lead near
pericardiophrenic
vein

Wire down
pericardiophrenic
vein



69

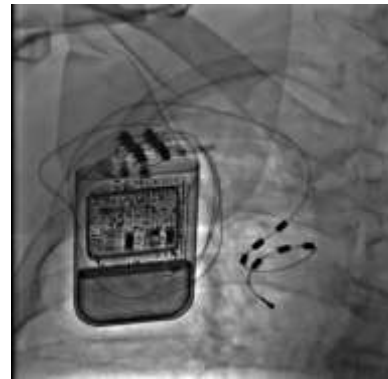
Pericardiophrenic vein too
small for lead, so had to use
SVC site.

Phrenic Stimulation test



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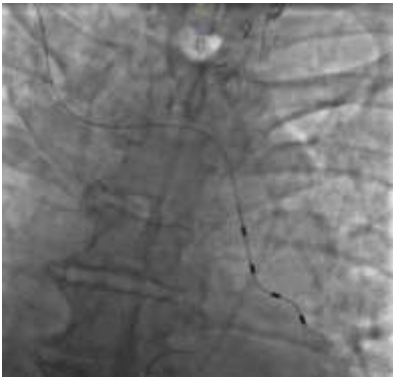
Pacing lead in
Brachiocephalic/SVC



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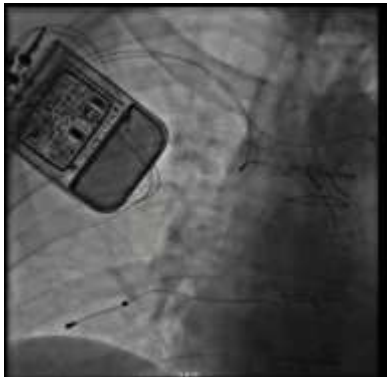
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Lead in Pericardiophrenic vein
Venogram of Azygous vein for sensing lead



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Pacing lead in pericardiophrenic and sensing lead in azygous vein



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Conclusions

Central Sleep Apnea contributes to a harmful progressive cycle of hypoxia, arousal and sympathetic activation

There have been few treatments for central sleep apnea and little randomized data demonstrating efficacy

Phrenic nerve stimulation offers a safe and effective therapeutic option for the treatment of CSA with improvements in both sleep and quality of life

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Questions?



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Epworth Sleepiness Scale

Question: Sleepiness Scale

Instructions: In your last 4 weeks, would you do the following activities and feel as if you were too sleepy to do them? If you are too sleepy to do them, please check "yes". If you are not too sleepy to do them, please check "no".

Using the following table, record the sleepiness level for each situation.

Situation	1 Never too sleepy	2 Rarely too sleepy	3 Sometimes too sleepy	4 Often too sleepy	5 Always too sleepy
Sitting and reading	0	0	0	0	0
Watching TV	0	0	0	0	0
Sitting, watching in a public place (e.g., in a meeting, in a car, on a train)	0	0	0	0	0
As a passenger in a car for at least 15 minutes, sleeping or nearly sleeping	0	0	0	0	0
Walking while talking on a mobile phone	0	0	0	0	0
Sitting and eating or drinking	0	0	0	0	0
Sitting quietly after a meal without activity	0	0	0	0	0
As a passenger in a car for at least 15 minutes, not sleeping	0	0	0	0	0

Notes: The maximum possible score is 24. A score of 10 or higher indicates excessive daytime sleepiness. A score of 15 or higher indicates severe daytime sleepiness. A score of 20 or higher indicates extreme daytime sleepiness.

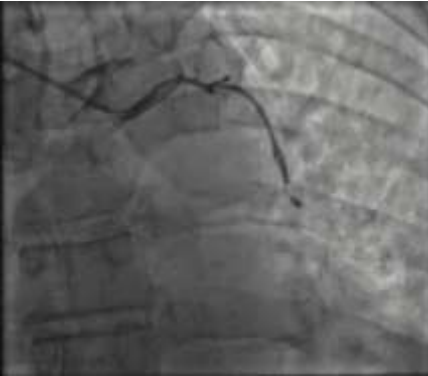
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STOP-BANG Sleep Apnea Questionnaire

Chung P, et al. Laryngology 2008 and 024, 2007

STOP		
Do you SNORE loudly (louder than talking or loud enough to be heard through closed doors)?	Yes	No
Do you often feel TIRED, fatigued, or sleepy during daytime?	Yes	No
Has anyone OBSERVED you stop breathing during your sleep?	Yes	No
Do you have or are you being treated for high blood PRESSURE?	Yes	No
BANG		
Body mass index (BMI)?	Yes	No
Age over 50 years old?	Yes	No
Neck circumference > 16 inches (40 cm)?	Yes	No
Glennoid: Male?	Yes	No
TOTAL SCORE		

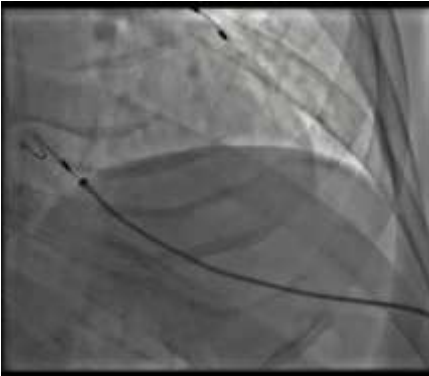
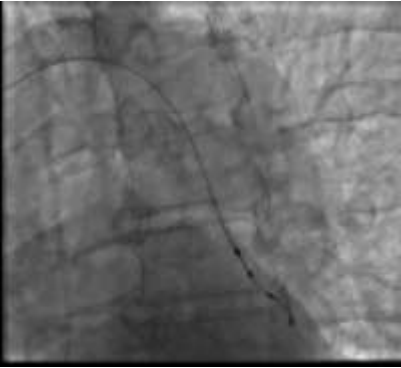
High risk of OSA: 3 to 5
Intermediate risk: 6 to 8
Low risk: 9 to 12



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remedē System Pivotal Trial Safety Events

Primary Safety Endpoint: Serious Adverse Events Related to Implant, Procedure, remedē System, and/or Delivered Therapy through 12 Months	Intention to Treat (N=151)	
	n (Events)	% (Patients)
Any serious related AE	13	9%
Lead Dislodgment ¹	2	1%
Impending Pocket Erosion	2	1%
Implant Site Infection	2	1%
Concomitant Device Interaction	1	1%
Extra Respiratory Stimulation ²	1	1%
Lead Component Failure	1	1%
Lead Displacement ³	1	1%
Implant Site Hematoma	1	1%
Non-Cardiac Chest Pain	1	1%
Elevated Transaminase	1	1%

Continued MR, et al. The Lancet 2016;388:876-82

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Implanter and Sleep doctor team

Sleep Doctor makes initial diagnosis and referral for device

Electrophysiologist is primary implanter and manages any device issues or complications.

Sleep Doctor is primary programmer with Respicardia representative with follow up sleep studies

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