

# Breathe well, sleep well, look well

Professor Alwyn D'Souza discusses the importance of nasal breathing



EXAMINATION OF THE NOSE AND THROAT

NASAL ENDOSCOPY

A blocked nose is a common condition that affects 10-40% of the population. It's commonly caused by either swelling of the nasal lining in reaction to pollutants and allergens, or structural deformities such as a bent nose, deviated nasal septum or nasal polyps.

The nasal cavity helps humidify, warm and filter the air we breathe, before this air passes to the lungs. This means that nasal issues not only can affect the lungs, but also cause snoring and obstructive sleep apnoea (OSA), which is the cessation of breathing during sleep, for more than 10 seconds at least five times an hour. OSA leads to respiratory distress, causing brain activation during sleep. This triggers micro awakenings, preventing patients from achieving complete restorative sleep. This cycle has several effects:

1. Social effects — a negative impact on personal relationships.
2. Neurocognitive symptoms, such as daytime sleepiness, drowsiness, deficits in attention, concentration, memory, and executive functioning.
3. Health risks — the body responds to OSA by releasing stress hormones, and toxins, which could lead to high blood pressure, obesity and diabetes. At its worst, OSA could potentially contribute to heart attacks and increase the risk of road traffic accidents, both of which could be avoided with early diagnosis and appropriate management.

The most easily identified symptom of OSA is snoring, which accounts roughly 30 million people in the UK, including 41.5% of the adult population, but it also occurs in children. Both men and women are affected in a 2.3:1 ratio. Men tend to snore louder than women, and though 58% of snorers are between ages 50-59, all age groups are affected.

However, snoring is just a symptom, but a complex one, as the sound generates persistent vibration around the nasal and throat



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structures including the tonsils, palate, base of the tongue and surroundings. The vibration progressively damages the throat nerves and muscles contributing to the collapse of the airway that causes OSA. Though snoring and OSA can't be stopped at will, nor 100% cured, both can be successfully reduced. The first step in treating snoring is to diagnose the exact source of the noise, which includes a full examination and assessment of the nasal passages and upper airway structures, which should ideally be performed by an

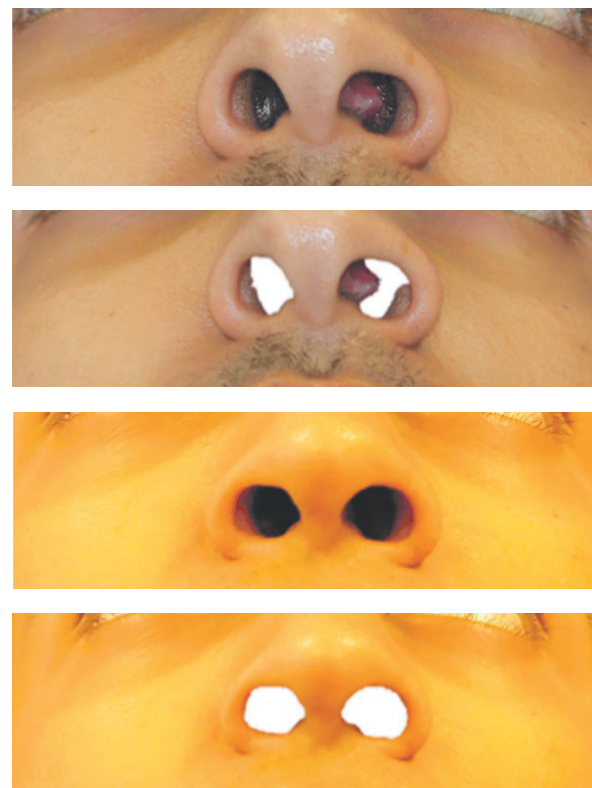
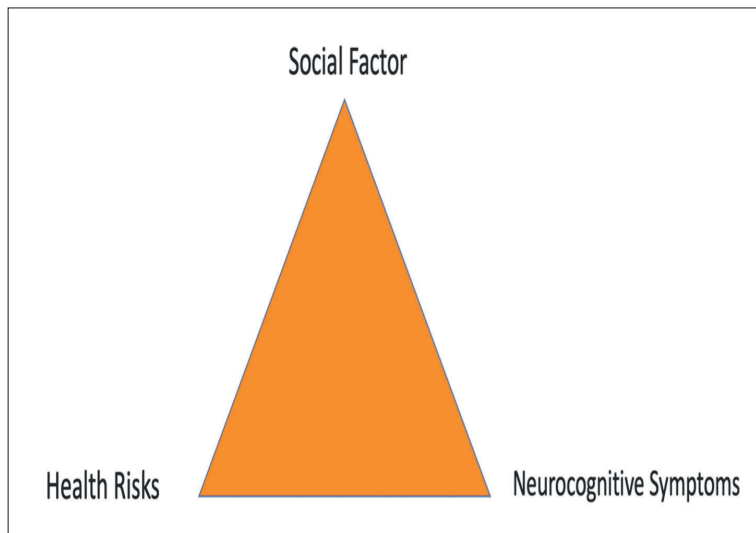
expert nasal surgeon in an appropriate clinic setting.

An endoscopic examination is an essential as it means doctors can assess whether the airway can guarantee a permanent and fluid passage of air without collapsing the upper airway at night.

Once the cause of the snoring has been identified, the nasal compromise is generally addressed first, perhaps under surgical correction as part of septo-rhinoplasty procedure. Other sources of obstruction (such as the bulkiness of the palate, tongue base and large tonsils) can then be addressed by a variety of



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THE WHITE AREA SHOWS THE AIRWAY BEFORE AND AFTER SEPTO-RHINOPLASTY SURGERY CARRIED OUT TO IMPROVE AIRWAY AND AESTHETICS

novel surgical procedures such as radiofrequency, ablation tonsillectomy and suture suspension of the pharyngeal muscles. Other non-invasive procedures such as mandibular advance splints or the novel neuromuscular electrical stimulation of the tongue may be required to endure the tone of the muscles in the tongue and mouth. Patient care doesn't stop at surgery though, as endocrine complementary studies, weight control and exercise should also be explored to achieve a comprehensive care programme to impact snores and the OSA patient's wellbeing. Achieving adequate nasal breathing allows better sleep quality

while reducing the snoring significantly, so patients go about their day-to-day life feeling refreshed and looking forward to going to sleep.

At this snoring clinic, based at 55 Harley Street, this comprehensive streamlined approach has become its ethos. The services headed by Professor Alwyn D'Souza, and his team of specialised talented surgeons, professionals and other allied specialists, work together to help patients breathe and sleep better and to improve their wellbeing.

● For further information visit: [londonfacialsurgery.org](http://londonfacialsurgery.org) [londonentassociates.org](http://londonentassociates.org)