

# The Thalidomide Trust



## Additional Issues to Consider

---

In this section we have included other issues that may be relevant to your thalidomide-affected patient.

---

### Obstructive Sleep Apnoea

#### Is my patient with Thalidomide Embryopathy more at risk of Obstructive Sleep Apnoea (OSA)?

Although there is currently no evidence that thalidomide affected individuals are more at risk of developing OSA, they are of an age where OSA is more likely to be present. In addition, they may have more risk factors, such as being overweight and being more likely to smoke and drink alcohol to excess.

#### Anatomy

Some thalidomide affected individuals have anatomical changes such as jaw and nose differences<sup>1</sup> which may make them more likely to develop OSA.

#### Special Considerations

As thalidomide can affect facial anatomy, it may be more difficult to find a CPAP mask that fits well. Those with upper limb dysplasia may find it hard to put on and take off a CPAP mask without assistance.

### What can I do for my patient with OSA?"

#### Referral

Referral to a sleep disorders clinic who have experience in seeing complex cases may be required. The Thalidomide Trust can help with an appropriate recommendation.

#### Self-management

Offering lifestyle advice such as weight loss, smoking cessation and reducing alcohol. This needs to be handled sensitively given the prevalence of mental health issues within the thalidomide community which can make giving up addictive behaviours harder.

### How can the Thalidomide Trust help?

If a beneficiary needs referral to secondary care for assessment and you are facing prolonged NHS waiting lists and/or the need is urgent, the Thalidomide Trust can assist in making a private referral which can generally be funded from an individual's Health Grant (specific funding allocated to each thalidomide affected individual to cover additional costs associated with their thalidomide disabilities).

---

Whether you would like general advice or would like to discuss a specific patient, you can speak to one of the **Thalidomide Trust's Medical Advisers on 01480 474074.**

---