Print ISSN 1225-7044 / Online ISSN 2288-985X
JKNA
Neurology Education Section (Podcast)
https://doi.org/10.17340/jkna.2026.0075
Journal of The Korean Neurological Association 44(4):389-391, 2026

체중 감량을 넘어 수면무호흡증 치료 전략의 확장으로: Tirzepatide의 임상적 근거와 과제

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Tirzepatide and Obstructive Sleep Apnea: Emerging Evidence and Evolving Treatment Strategies

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J Korean Neurol Assoc 44(4):389-391, 2026

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Received October 21, 2026
Revised October 21, 2026
Accepted October 21, 2026

Obstructive sleep apnea (OSA) is a common sleep-related breathing disorder closely associated with obesity and increased cardiovascular and metabolic risks. Although positive airway pressure (PAP) therapy remains the cornerstone of treatment, growing evidence supports weight management as an important therapeutic strategy targeting the underlying pathophysiology of OSA.

Tirzepatide, a dual glucose-dependent insulinotropic polypeptide (GIP) and glucagon-like peptide-1 (GLP-1) receptor agonist, has expanded the therapeutic options for adults with obesity and OSA. In two phase 3 SURMOUNT-OSA trials, conducted separately in participants not receiving PAP therapy and those receiving PAP therapy, tirzepatide significantly reduced the apnea–hypopnea index (AHI), body weight, and sleep apnea-specific hypoxic burden over 52 weeks. In December 2024, the United States Food and Drug Administration approved tirzepatide for moderate-to-severe OSA in adults with obesity, alongside reduced-calorie diet and increased physical activity. In contrast, the European Medicines Agency did not recommend a separate OSA indication for tirzepatide, while incorporating the relevant evidence into its product information.

This podcast examines the rationale for targeting obesity in OSA, the

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principal findings of SURMOUNT-OSA and subsequent analyses, and their implications for clinical care. Particular attention is given to patient selection, the complementary roles of pharmacotherapy and PAP, dose titration and tolerability, adverse-effect monitoring, and objective reassessment of OSA severity after substantial weight loss. We also consider the extent to which the observed benefits are mediated by weight reduction and the uncertainties surrounding long-term durability, cardiovascular outcomes, and treatment discontinuation.[1-6]

Tirzepatide represents an important advance in obesity-associated OSA management, but it should be integrated into individualized, multimodal care rather than regarded as a universal replacement for established OSA therapies. This discussion provides a balanced, evidence-based perspective on its emerging role in sleep medicine and neurology.

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Professor Hyeyun Kim

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