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ASSISTED MECHANICAL VENTILATION THROUGH INDIVIDUALLY FITTED NASAL MASK BRINGS COMFORTABLE SLEEP AND IMPROVES QUALITY OF LIFE IN MODERATE RESPIRATORY INSUFFICIENCY
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Hypoventilation night-time during sleep can be expected among patients with chronic respiratory muscle weakness, especially as a late complication to polio or neuromuscular disorders. This might cause reduction in physical and mental daytime alertness.

Method: We have offered assisted mechanical ventilation (MV) at home through an individually fitted **Remmer nasal mask**[®] to 67 patients, mean age 56 yrs, range 7-78 yrs. Good adaptation of the mask makes comfortable sleep possible. They were supported with technical and medical staff at the Respiratory Unit. Main diagnoses were: a previous history of poliomyelitis with sequelae (n=33) or tuberculosis (n=7), neuromuscular disease (n=18), kyphoscoliosis (n=5), and others (n=4).

Results: We interviewed 40 patients in reference to symptoms of night-time hypoventilation after >6 months of therapy. Of these patients 33/ (73%) could sleep more than 6 h night-time with the nasal mask. A reduction of symptoms was observed, in chronic fatigue (72%), morning headache (86%), daytime drowsiness (82%), depression/irritation (55%) and sleep disturbance (63%).

Conclusion: Assisted MV with a **Remmer nasal mask**[®] can be applied polyclinically in moderate respiratory insufficiency. Increased quality of life can be expected after >6 months of therapy in 70-80% of patients.

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