



COLIN SULLIVAN

Graduated 1962

Colin Sullivan (1958-1962) was a young medical researcher and clinician at the University of Sydney and Royal Prince Alfred Hospital in 1980 when he invented a revolutionary method for the study and treatment of Obstructive Sleep Apnoea (OSA). Professor Sullivan established the first clinical sleep laboratory and clinic in Australia at Royal Prince Alfred Hospital in 1979, and subsequently the first paediatric sleep laboratories at both Westmead and Sydney Children's Hospitals. He trained a generation of physicians, researchers and technologists. Together as a team they unravelled many of the mechanisms of sleep disordered breathing.

Professor Sullivan's Nasal CPAP invention was initially greeted with a combination of mirth about the snoring and scepticism that patients would be prepared to use it. Now OSA is taken seriously and recognized as a common, life-threatening condition and Nasal CPAP is acknowledged as the leading treatment. Professor Sullivan's life-saving method prevents the morbid and fatal complications of OSA, such as hypertension and other common vascular diseases, and has given rise to Sleep Medicine as an important branch of clinical medicine.

In 2009 Colin Sullivan was awarded the Order of Australia medal (AO) for his contribution to medical science.