

Talking Sleep Season 4

Episode 8

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SLEEP Meeting Preview

Dr. Shalini Paruthi, guest

Episode Transcript

**DR. KHOSLA:** Thank you for joining us for Talking Sleep, a podcast of the American Academy of Sleep Medicine. I'm your host, Dr. Seema Khosla, medical director of the North Dakota Center for Sleep in Fargo.

So I'm really excited about APSS 2022. I haven't been to an in-person conference since prior to the pandemic. To speak with us today about the conference is Dr. Shalini Paruthi. Dr. Paruthi is a pediatric sleep medicine specialist and is the current chair of the APSS Program Committee. She is medical co-director of the St Luke's Sleep Medicine and Research Center. She is also adjunct associate professor at St Louis University. Welcome, Dr. Paruthi.

**DR. PARUTHI:** Thanks for having me today.

**DR. KHOSLA:** So I was going through the program, and I saw lots of topics that I think are really interesting. I've been going to the sleep meeting for a few years now and I'm really happy that it is back in person. So I have to ask you, as chair of this committee, what are you most excited to see?

**DR. PARUTHI:** Well, I love everything about this meeting. I've also been going every year since 2006, and I really love and am most excited about seeing people. I think we're all gathering because we are just so passionate about sleep, whether it's solving the puzzles in sleep, like why we sleep, how we sleep, how to improve sleep, how best to help treat our patients, to help them sleep better, and so forth. So it is just such a wonderful, great exchange of information, whether it's formal through sessions and meetings at the actual meeting or it's informally like with coffee

in the hallways or, you know, dinner and beverages in the evening. So I love seeing people and I'm really excited that we are going to be back in person.

**DR. KHOSLA:** So you have to help me now because I never remember which is which. So I was going through the program so what is a like a Rapid Fire symposium? How is that different from a discussion group? Like what are all of these categories?

**DR. PARUTHI:** Lots of categories. Lots of different session types at the meeting this year. And you are exactly right that they all even have their own abbreviations in our program or if you're using the app. And so as a reminder, we have lots of different things. So there are postgraduate courses that are actually held on Saturday and Sunday. So kind of before the actual meeting opens up for the general sessions starting on Sunday afternoon.

There are discussion groups. Now, these are great forums where you've got a group of presenters. There's not a lot of didactic teaching. It's actually more slides with questions and thoughts and encouraging our attendees to get up to the microphone and share their experiences, share their thoughts and really have an interactive conversation.

We also have rapid fire symposia, so these are absolutely fantastic. If you want to hear the latest original research from a junior level investigators and clinicians focusing on really the latest ideas, the latest projects that they're working on, rapid fire symposiums are perfect for that.

We also have several other types of other types of sessions. So there are lunch debates. There are also Meet the Professor sessions that happen during the lunch hour as well. And if you go to a debate, it's exactly that. We have tried to come up with some great topics where you can hear both sides of the issue. Perhaps there's even many sides of that issue. And so lunch debates are absolutely fantastic on that. Meet the Professors are really having an hour or so to delve into certain topics, and those are quite informal, there are actually no slides at the professors. So it's a very interactive lunch session there.

Throughout the meeting, you will also see oral session or oral presentation sessions. And so again, these are going to be researchers at all levels, from junior researchers to more senior

faculty, clinicians and basic science scientists. And so they'll be presenting their data in 15 minute blocks as well.

So lots of great session types out there. We actually even have a technologist track and to keep sort of track of which track you want to follow, these are all coded again in the program or in the app as well. So for people who are very interested in a certain topic or certain types of sessions, you'll be able to have something literally for every morning, every afternoon, every day.

**DR. KHOSLA:** That's all I remember doing a Meet the Professor with Dr. Susan Redline years ago, and I was so starstruck and I think everybody in the room was; it was a fantastic session. And I think the thing I love the most, though, are the pro con debates, you know, especially because people seem to have a sense of humor. Right. And so they kind of pull out these points that, you know, I hadn't considered before.

**DR. PARUTHI:** Absolutely. And that's what we try our very best to come up with some excellent topics.

**DR. KHOSLA:** So when I look at this and when I've been in the SLEEP meeting, especially in the first few years, it was kind of overwhelming, you know? So I appreciate what you said about the tech track, but how do you decide what to see? I mean, what are the other tracks?

**DR. PARUTHI:** So to be honest, the program committee actually loves the complaint of, "there are too many great sessions at the same time. How am I supposed to see everything?" Well, right and so and that's our job. So as a program committee, we are tasked with sorting through all of the session proposals that come in, all the abstracts that come in and really trying to produce a program that there is literally something for everyone, whether you are a sleep scientist, you are a sleep clinician, and maybe you want to spend some of your time in more clinical workshops for some of the time. But you want to definitely make sure you go and attend the sessions that are more basic science as well. In certain areas, whether you are someone who does exclusively pediatrics, you should be able to essentially have something to do for essentially every morning

or afternoon while you are at the meeting. And again, you'll be able to follow those tracks in the program book or in the app.

**DR. KHOSLA:** So tell me more about what goes on behind the scenes. So I'm picturing you with, you know, a million different submissions. So how do you figure out what goes where?

**DR. PARUTHI:** So this is so I will say that the program committee works year round. So we have a sort of thank you to our outgoing members at the June meeting for the program committee. And right away we are already starting to think about say 2023. And so we're onboarding our new program committee members in June and we actually start meeting in August to develop our hot topics for the SLEEP meeting. So, by fall we're requesting submissions for session proposals that are post-grad session proposals, general session proposals, abstracts and then as those start to come in, then we start to sort through them. We are ranking them, we are meeting together. So we actually meet multiple times throughout the year for multiple days at a time sometimes to really make sure that we can create programming that is outstanding.

**DR. KHOSLA:** I was looking at the list of invited speakers, and what really struck me was how many just incredibly innovative people we have in our field. You know, you look at that page and you're just like, oh, wow, look at that. And then you're like, oh, wow, look at that. So which one caught your eye?

**DR. PARUTHI:** Well, to be fair, I will say that all of them are awesome. And that's the discussion that happens when members of the AASM and the SRS are sitting together and we want to create this very diverse well rounded meeting. And there are just so many fantastic researchers, clinicians, scientists in our in our field that narrowing it down to even just nine invited speakers is actually very difficult to do. So we are very lucky that we are able to invite the cream of the crop every year and again, we we really want to make sure it's well-rounded. So we're looking for I think this year you're gonna hear some really great lectures on sleep-disordered breathing and cardiovascular implications with our plenary speaker. You're also going to hear developmental sleep, you're going to hear about pediatrics, you hear about hypersomnia,

and with a neuro there's neurodegeneration or neuro trauma and sleep. So I think we've got a little bit for everyone.

**DR. KHOSLA:** So that is super cool. I have to ask you, so I didn't actually realize that APSS was a committee. How can people get involved in this?

**DR. PARUTHI:** Yes. So within the American Academy of Sleep Medicine and the Sleep Research Society, each organization has a program committee and so typically we are four members from each organization, in addition to one member who represents psychology or insomnia and then we also have our board liaison. So we are together, we make up one big APSS program committee. And so if you would like to be part of the program committee, you would want to apply when your organization is soliciting applications for different committees. And we actually also have an APSS board of directors that is created from a board of directors of each organization as well. And so they provide some larger oversight into our programing as well.

**DR. KHOSLA:** Well, let's take a short break, and when we come back, we will hear more about the upcoming conference. You're listening to Talking Sleep from the American Academy of Sleep Medicine.

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**DR. KHOSLA:** Welcome back to Talking Sleep. Our guest today is Dr. Shalini Paruthi, chair of the APSS Program Committee.

So as much as I love conferences, you know, the thing I really, really look forward to is seeing my friends and meeting new people. And I think you had hinted at that earlier about this, you know, networking. Do you think people are ready for an in-person conference?

**DR. PARUTHI:** I think people are really looking forward to an in-person conference. I feel many people feel like we've all been cooped up for the last couple of years. And while we've had some absolutely outstanding sessions and very successful virtual meetings the last two years, I think it'll be really great to get to that networking and collaboration and in-person. And as far as we know, as of right now, we will be following the local ordinance recommendations in terms of masking on site in June in North Carolina. But of course, everyone should do what they need to do to feel state, to feel safe and healthy.

**DR. KHOSLA:** And that will be encouraged, right? Yes. Nobody's going to be shamed for, you know, wearing a mask or, you know, what have you. So talk about the other stuff. So I feel like I get so caught up in the meeting and then kind of hanging out with my friends that I kind of miss some of the other stuff. So I was flipping through the program and I think there's like a baseball game going on?

**DR. PARUTHI:** Yes. So sometimes what do we think about the SLEEP meeting we kind of think about all the information on that, but we have to kind of think that it's actually, we want to make it as fun of a conference time as we can. So you are exactly right. So for those who are interested in donating to the political action committee, they did organize a trip out to a baseball game on Saturday night.

In terms of other activities that are also going on, there is actually the PJ5K Run/Walk, which will be taking place Sunday morning. And people are encouraged to come in their family appropriate pajamas. And of course, any money raised will be used will be donated to the American Academy of Sleep Medicine's Foundation, as well as the Sleep Research Society's Foundation. So all of that money that will be raised will go towards funding very valuable research. So that's very exciting.

**DR. KHOSLA:** Is it really in your PJs? Are you serious?

**DR. PARUTHI:** You can come in your PJs. And so I actually purchased a set of PJs from the American Academy of Sleep Medicine. So I will be putting together and there's a lot of new

things, items showing up in the AASM shop lately. So very exciting there. And in addition, the SRS Club Hypnos will also be happening on Sunday evening. So that's a great time to meet up with old colleagues, meet new college. So great time there. There will also be industry-sponsored events going on throughout the meeting in the evenings as well. So I think it's really important to remember that there is a lot going on even with your colleagues outside of the actual session times.

**DR. KHOSLA:** Mm hmm. I didn't realize that there was that much stuff going on.

**DR. PARUTHI:** Yes. And in addition, of course, there are just really some exciting, fun things to do all around Charlotte. So, for example, I was looking this up but definitely in addition to art museums and museums, there is actually the US National Whitewater Center. So for people who love live enjoying the outdoors. Oh yes. And there's actually also the NASCAR Hall of Fame. So I thought that might be interesting to some folks. And the other thing that I know that staff from the American Academy of Sleep Medicine have worked on is that we will be able to show our badges at some of the different restaurants nearby and you might have a discount arranged there.

**DR. KHOSLA:** Oh, that's kind of cool, but it's a pro-con right? Because then you have to walk around town with your badge.

**DR. PARUTHI:** I believe it's all the ones that are really close by. So not too far.

**DR. KHOSLA:** So let's go back to the content a little bit because I saw your name on a bunch of different sessions. So you're doing one on advocacy. And I'm really interested in this and learning more about how we can advocate for our patients. So, I mean, don't give away a spoiler, but what do you what are you talking about?

**DR. PARUTHI:** So I think that one of the most important things that I have found in my clinical practice is that people are so much more likely to follow our suggestions or recommendations if they understand and know the why behind what we're recommending. And so given the fast pace of medicine and needing to have patients seen in either, you know, 15 minute increments or 20 minute increments or three minute increments, sometimes it's hard for us to be able to give our

patients all of the information that they could need or want to know about their different sleep disorders.

And so I think that's where advocacy groups can really help extend that knowledge that patients can really use. And so I feel like they often have a wealth of information. Usually it's been checked out, so it's pretty truthful and honest and I think when patients are able to see that they're not alone and that there are so many other people who have the same disorders and kind of just learning some new strategies or ideas or different treatment options that they can then ask their physicians about or be able to even sort of fine tune the questions that they want to ask the doctor about. So I think advocacy groups really play an important role and they're really helping our patients better understand their disorders and also improving our treatment outcomes.

**DR. KHOSLA:** Well, and it's so important to have a vetted advocacy group, right? I mean, like there's that, you know, there's different Facebook groups that can get kind of dark and some are full of misinformation, you know, and so you really I think it is really important to know where to steer your patient.

**DR. PARUTHI:** Right. And I think sometimes we often get busy in our clinical practices that, you know, we have to take the time to figure out where are good resources that are honest, truthful information that we can refer our patients to. So that that's what I will be highlighting is some of the different advocacy groups and how to for your patients to them as well.

**DR. KHOSLA:** Oh, that is that's super important. So then you're kind of doing something completely different because you're talking about our RLS. So is this like medications or non-pharmacologic therapies? Are you going to talk about opioids?

**DR. PARUTHI:** Great question. So I will be doing pediatric RLS updates, in the postgrad course that is on RLS. So you know, I think when we talk about babies who could potentially have RLS because they're so restless and not sleeping well to the toddlers who sometimes are like my feet hurt my arm and have growing pains and we now know the overlap of growing



pains and restless leg syndrome to like the 17 year old who are getting ready to sort of enter adulthood.

And so it's just making sure that we're looking for the right clues whether it's how the child is acting or moving in their sleep or moving around before they fall asleep as well as things like family history. You know when both parents have restless legs syndrome, guess what? Maybe their child has the same thing and that's because of their insomnia.

And so I'm just kind of some new updates on pediatric RLS and you may have kind of been hearing more talk of restless sleep disorder, which is a little bit of a bigger umbrella as that disorder sort of being better defined over these next few months or years. So there will be a little bit of discussion on medications and kids. We really hope that we're able to treat it more with iron, but there are going to be some children that have more refractory RLS and so off label discussion medications. I would say that it'll be a great update in pediatric RLS.

**DR. KHOSLA:** Oh, that's very cool. So, you know, I've been kind of reflecting upon, you know, the last, what, 2-3 years now where we've had these virtual conferences and now, you know, I'm very excited about this in-person conference, but it makes me think about all of the things we kind of had to learn, right? Like we had to learn how to pivot and do this thing online and, you know, and they had to figure out, well, what platform do we use? And then as attendees, we have to figure out, you know, like, how do I navigate through this? And one of the things that that I loved was actually your recorded intro from last year you know, you came out and I think it was I heard it was done like at a TV studio, and the rumor is that you did it in one take. Is that true?

**DR. PARUTHI:** This is true. So but I have to give all the credit to the staff for the AASM. And so they had actually arranged for they had found a recording studio here in St Louis and my job was to show up and they actually had a teleprompter for me, so.

**DR. KHOSLA:** Oh, nice.

**DR. PARUTHI:** As impressive as I looked. It was really all the behind the scenes work from all the health of the American Academy of Sleep Medicine staff.

**DR. KHOSLA:** See, so that's another skill you picked up right, during the pandemic?

**DR. PARUTHI:** Absolutely. And I do want to take a couple of minutes here and just really give just a huge amount of gratitude towards the staff for the American Academy of Sleep Medicine and the SRS. They've really done all the work behind the scenes with us as program committee to make sure that this is going to be the best meeting yet.

**DR. KHOSLA:** Yay! So is this your last year as chair?

**DR. PARUTHI:** It is. So I have I have done an incredible and absolutely delightful six years on the program committee. So last year and this year, I saw this chair and I will be handing off the baton to Dr. Rebecca Spencer for the next two years.

**DR. KHOSLA:** Yeah, well, that's exciting. So what's next for you?

**DR. PARUTHI:** Well, lots more fun stuff. I am very passionate about sleep and hopefully making contributions that are advancing our field. So I am currently also on the task force for the ICSD-3 revision in the sleep-disordered breathing section. So that project is still ongoing so that's where I'm going to focus my attention next.

**DR. KHOSLA:** That was actually helpful when I had to recertify.

**DR. PARUTHI:** Yes. So very helpful.

**DR. KHOSLA:** Like every word, I was like, oh yeah. You know, the things that you at one point you, you knew, right? Then you just need that refresher.

**DR. PARUTHI:** Exactly.

**DR. KHOSLA:** So you hinted at did I hear you right? Did you say you have AASM pajamas?

**DR. PARUTHI:** I do.

**DR. KHOSLA:** OK. I have socks. I've never even heard of AASM pajamas.

**DR. PARUTHI:** I have started to accumulate. I have some coffee mugs that are my heart sleep and pajamas.

**DR. PARUTHI:** So I love all types of souvenirs. I have actually already purchased my when I was registering things, I purchased my poster souvenir.

**DR. KHOSLA:** So tell me about that. I saw that advertised and I don't remember seeing posters before. Like, is it an actual like stick it on the wall poster?

**DR. PARUTHI:** You got it. So it is a poster. And I don't remember the exact dimensions, but I believe it's about a 16 by 20 poster. And so this is very interesting. But in the sleep center where I see patients, we like our I guess my partners have been going to the meetings since the beginning. So Jim Walsh was one of my partners until he retired and so on the walls within our sleep center are actually these framed posters, souvenirs from all the different meetings. So I actually really need to sort of see the locations through the meetings I've been held in the past and it just kind of serves as a reminder of just how great it is to be able to network with our colleagues, whether it's an inspiring new research studies, whether it's, you know, learning best practices to treat our patients, but very inspiring when we sort of think about the meetings.

**DR. KHOSLA:** I don't ever remember seeing one. I need to pay more attention when I'm there.

**DR. PARUTHI:** I think that they were not produced for several meetings in a row, and so they have been brought back for this year.

**DR. KHOSLA:** Oh, it's like a reboot.

**DR. PARUTHI:** Yes.

**DR. KHOSLA:** So, Shalini, any final thoughts?

**DR. PARUTHI:** Well, we encourage and look forward to seeing everybody at SLEEP 2022 and as a reminder, early bird registration deadline is coming right up, right around the corner. So April 24th. So for everybody, the registration deadline, April 24th.

**DR. KHOSLA:** Well thank you for all of your work on this conference. There's so much more involved than I had ever realized.

**DR. PARUTHI:** It is our pleasure. The program committee is delighted that we have been able to put together such a fantastic program.

**DR. KHOSLA:** Well and thank you for telling us about it today. I'm really looking forward to this meeting.

**DR. PARUTHI:** Thanks for having me.

**DR. KHOSLA:** Thanks for listening to Talking Sleep, brought to you by the American Academy of Sleep Medicine. For more podcast episodes, please visit our website at [aasm.org](http://aasm.org). You can also subscribe through your favorite podcast service. And if you enjoyed this episode, please take a moment to leave a rating or review. For more feedback or suggestions email us at [podcast@aasm.org](mailto:podcast@aasm.org). I hope you'll join us again for more Talking Sleep. Until next time this is Seema Khosla, encouraging you to sleep well so you can live well.