Patient evaluation case study

Meet Rafael. His poor sleep quality is starting to affect his work life and his family relationships. He is excessively sleepy in the daytime.

He drives 45 minutes to his job every morning. His job starts at 7:00am. He works in a warehouse and operates heavy equipment like loaders and forklifts.

Rafael is married and has two adult children living with him in a two-bedroom apartment. One of them sleeps on the couch. His 83-year-old father lives a few blocks away. His mom died two years ago at the age of 78.

He is 54 years old, 1.82 meters tall, and weighs 102 kilograms. He smokes about 10 cigarettes a day. He drinks three strong cups of coffee each morning. In the evening, he usually drinks two or three beers before he goes to bed. He is on medication for hypertension. He does not use melatonin or sleeping pills. He often falls asleep in front of the TV at night.

His wife uses her cell phone in bed to scroll through social media before they go to sleep.

Rafael's wife, Alejandra, has made him get a medical appointment and has come with him to the appointment. It is clear from his attitude that Rafael thinks this medical appointment is probably a waste of time.

According to Alejandra, Rafael snores heavily. He also grinds his teeth at night. Rafael denies these things, saying that if he snored or ground his teeth while sleeping, he would certainly know about it. Alejandra also informs the medical professional that Rafael has more nightmares than a normal person. He occasionally acts out or yells in his sleep. These nightmares usually occur when he's stressed out at work. Rafael, of course, doesn't think his nightmares are any big deal. He says everyone has them once in a while. When asked, Alejandra says that Rafael doesn't kick her in bed. In other words, he doesn't have restless legs.

In Rafael's review of systems (ROS), the medical professional discovers that Rafael has gained 15 pounds in the last three months. His hypertension is under control. His cardiovascular and gastrointestinal systems are both fine as well.

Here are Rafael's STOP-BANG results (refer to page 11 of your text manuscript).

STOP-BANG Questions	Results
Do you snore loudly?	Yes (according to Alejandra)
Do you often feel tired, fatigued, or sleepy during the daytime?	Yes (according to Rafael)
Has anyone observed you stop breathing during sleep?	No
Do you have (or are you being treated for) high blood pressure?	Yes
Body mass index	35.6 kg/m2
Age	54
Neck circumference	38 cm
Gender	Male

On the Epworth Sleepiness Scale (refer to page 11 again), here are Rafael's results.
How likely are you to fall asleep...? (0 = never, and 3 = quite often)

Sitting and reading	0 1 **(2)** 3
Watching TV	0 1 2 **(3)**
Sitting, inactive in a public place	0 **(1)** 2 3
As a car passenger	0 **(1)** 2 3
Lying down to rest in the afternoon	0 1 2 **(3)**
Sitting and talking to someone	**(0)** 1 2 3
Sitting quietly after a lunch without alcohol	0 **(1)** 2 3
In a car, while stopped for a few minutes in the traffic	0 **(1)** 2 3

So, clearly Rafael has a lot of reasons why he could be having such poor sleep. What issues do you think should be addressed first, and why do you think so? Do you have any thoughts on what are the causes and what are the effects of Rafael's poor sleep quality? Do you have any suggestions for further diagnostic testing? There is no one right answer for this case study, no magic solution. As a medical professional, you already know that. We're just looking for thoughtful discussion and insights here. We welcome your input.

You should write at least one 250-word paragraph in response. Longer responses, though, are welcome as well.