



Collaboration for leadership
in applied health research
and care
East of England



Participant Information Sheet

Understanding sleep and fatigue in ambulance service personnel

You are being invited to take part in a research study. Before you decide whether or not to participate, please read the following information so that you have an understanding of why the research is being done and how it will be conducted. Please take your time, feel free to discuss with others if you choose, and if you have any questions or would like more information before deciding whether to take part, details of the researchers are at the end of this information sheet. Take time over your decision and thank you in advance for reading this.

What is the purpose of the study?

Previous research has found that ambulance sector staff have high rates of poor sleep and fatigue at work. There has been no study looking specifically at sleep in ambulance sector personnel in the UK, so we don't know how common sleep problems are, what staff do to help them wind down and sleep after shift, and what impact poor sleep has on their wellbeing and work. We know from international evidence that poor sleep can affect physical health, mental health and wellbeing, concentration and decision-making. Understanding these associations are important as they may have implications for how ambulance personnel are trained and supported in their practice. This brief online survey will ask about your sleep quality and fatigue while at work, the impact you think this could have on your performance, what you currently do to help with sleep and fatigue at work, and whether you use any digital tools to help manage your health and wellbeing. We know some people sleep very well, and it's important we hear from you too so that we can understand how common sleep problems might be. This study has been funded by the NIHR Collaborative Leadership for Applied Health Research – East of England, and is being conducted by a research team with experience in paramedic research, sleep, fatigue, occupational health, and digital health. The design of the survey has been informed in consultation with ambulance sector staff and with ambulance users from the community.

Why have I been invited to take part in this study?

You are being considered for this study because you have indicated that you are over the age of 18, and work for EEAST NHS Ambulance service, and are available to complete an online survey.

Do I have to take part in the study?

No, participation is entirely up to you. If you decide to take part you will be asked to consent to participate before completing the online survey. Also, if you do participate you have the right to stop the survey at any time without reason. If you decide not to take part, or if you wish to leave the survey at any point, this will not lead to any penalty or negative repercussion.

What will happen to me if I take part?

All participants will be asked to complete an online survey which will include questions on: demographic information, job/role information, how well you sleep, fatigue, physical and mental wellbeing, and strategies used to help manage your sleep and alertness at work. The survey should

take around 30 minutes to complete.

What are the possible disadvantages and risks of taking part?

This survey asks about your sleep, if you experience fatigue at work and any strategies you use to help you sleep and manage fatigue at work. We will also ask about physical and mental health and health behaviours as these are known to influence sleep and fatigue. We will ask if you use any digital tools (such as Apps and online programmes) to manage your health and wellbeing. You are free to stop the survey at any time without consequence. If this survey raises issues for you there is information about support available at the bottom of this information sheet, as well as on the debrief sheet at the end of the survey.

What are the possible benefits of taking part?

Participating in this survey may not provide any direct benefits to you, however, the information you provide could help provide insight into the impact of sleep and fatigue on the health of NHS ambulance staff, and could help identify essential educational and workplace supports for ambulance services professionals. As a thank-you for participation you are invited to opt-in to a Prize Draw to win one of thirty £10 shop vouchers. This is optional. At the completion of the online survey a new window will open so you can enter your email address separately to your survey responses. It will not be possible to link your responses to your email address. At the end of data collection 30 email addresses will be randomly selected through random number generation with winners notified by their provided email address.

Will my taking part in the study be kept confidential?

Due to the nature of the survey you remain completely anonymous, we do not collect confidential information. You cannot be identified from your survey responses. All data will be kept on password protected computers and will be stored in accordance with the 2018 General Data Protection Regulations.

What will happen to the results of the research project?

A summary of results from all participants, which will include the data you provide will be written up and presented as part of a research project being undertaken at the University of East Anglia, and will be presented in journals and conferences. A summary of results will also be distributed internally to all EEAST staff. We will provide a summary of the overall results to Human Resources, the Wellbeing Service, and clinical Operations Manager, but as detailed above you will not be identifiable.

What if I decide I do not wish to carry on with the study?

The survey is in nine sections. As you complete each section of the questionnaire and press the 'submit' button, the anonymous answers you give are stored. At this point you will be unable to withdraw your answers for that section as we will not know which information is yours. However, you can exit the survey at any point.

How do I know that this research is safe for me to take part in?

All research undertaken at the University of East Anglia is looked at by an independent group of people, called a Research Ethics Committee, to protect your safety, rights, wellbeing, and dignity. This research was approved by the Faculty of Medicine and Health Sciences Research Ethics Committee at the University of East Anglia in October 2018.

If you have any questions about your health or wellbeing you can contact the following:

- *EEAST Wellbeing Hub*: wellbeing.info@nhs.net; 03456089945 (available 8-5 weekdays, and by answerphone at other times).
- Your GP
- *Samaritans* are available 24 hours a day to give to support to anyone who is struggling on 116 123 or via email jo@samaritans.org. More information is also available on their website <https://www.samaritans.org/>
- *Mind* is a charity that offers advice as well as counselling to anyone with a mental health condition in need of support <https://www.norwichmind.org.uk/get-support/talk-to-someone/low-cost-counselling>

You are under **no obligation** to agree to take part in this research.

If you do agree **you can withdraw at any time** without giving a reason.

Contact details:

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If you have any questions, comments, or concerns please do feel free to
contact us