



WE KNOW NEURO

MEDIA RELEASE

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NEWLY DEVELOPED THERAPY COULD PROVIDE A BRIGHT LIGHT FOR WESTERN AUSTRALIAN'S SUFFERING WITH POOR SLEEP AND FATIGUE

Researchers at Edith Cowan University are investigating the effects of light therapy on fatigue and excessive daytime sleepiness in people living with neurological conditions.

The MSWA supported research project will trial specially made glasses, worn for sixty minutes in the morning, which deliver targeted light therapy through the eyes – evaluating their value in improving sleep, reducing fatigue and increasing alertness throughout the day. This project forms part of MSWA's \$3.5million contribution into researching causes and better treatments of neurological conditions allocated last financial year.

Dr Danielle Bartlett, one of the researchers working on the project, said the light glasses had the potential to become a simple and effective form of therapy for many Western Australians living with a neurological condition.

"Our bodies are naturally in tune to the sun, but sometimes our busy schedules make sunlight hard to get. The light therapy glasses act as targeted sunlight by stimulating receptors in the eyes that suppress melatonin, essentially training the body to be awake," Dr Bartlett said.

"Light therapy has been shown to be effective in people living with Parkinson's disease and in individuals following traumatic brain injury. We're hoping to extend these findings into people living with other neurological conditions."

Dr Bartlett explained people living with neurological conditions commonly suffer from fatigue and sleep disorders presumably as a result of the high energy requirement for minimal movement, disturbed sleep cycles and medications.

"We have had a significant number of people living with a neurological condition report that they have had sleep problems and associated fatigue. 88% of people with Parkinson's and Huntington's disease, 70% of people with stroke and motor neurone disease, and 62% of people living with multiple sclerosis," said Dr Bartlett.

While preliminary research shows the positive effects of light therapy for neurological conditions, very few studies have investigated its effectiveness using apparel.

Given the initial success of the study, the team are optimistic that the non-invasive therapeutic approach will greatly benefit individuals living with neurological conditions, and likely the broader community suffering from fatigue and sleep disorders.

The trial is being conducted in collaboration with world experts in sleep and neuroscience from the University of Cambridge, University of Western Australia and Monash University.

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About MSWA

MSWA provides vital support and services to people living with neurological conditions in Western Australia, including multiple sclerosis, stroke, Parkinson's Disease, Huntington's Disease, Motor Neurone Disease Brain and acquired brain injury.

MSWA has a team of more than 800 staff who work passionately to provide the best possible care to people across the Perth metropolitan area and broader regional centres of Western Australia.

MSWA plays a vital role in educating the broader community, liaising with government and other relevant bodies on related issues, and advocating for the rights of people with neurological conditions and disability in general.

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