

# Daily quiet time to improve new mothers' health

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A quiet time scheduled every afternoon could improve the health of newborns and mothers in maternity wards according to researchers at

McGill University.

According to a previous American study, [new mothers](#) in maternity wards face around 53 [interruptions](#) every 12 hours from people entering the room. This disturbs sleep, interferes with breastfeeding opportunities and causes stress. Effects on [health](#) can vary from decreased immune function to stress-related cardio-vascular problems and postpartum [mental health disorders](#), the McGill researchers explain in a commentary published recently in the journal *BMC Health Services Research*.

They suggest a cheap and low-risk solution: scheduling a daily quiet time. "The afternoon would be a good moment, as the body reaches a natural low," lead author Safina Adatia explains. Her Master's thesis will assess the impact of the future implementation of this measure in St. Mary's Hospital in Montreal.

"This idea is fairly new in maternity wards, but daily quiet times have been implemented and evaluated in other units, such as intensive care units, where they have been effective," says Dr. Susan Law, a co-author, Associate Professor in Family Medicine at McGill and Vice President of Academic Affairs at St. Mary's.

The team is monitoring current sources of noise and causes for interruptions, to help decide what has to change in order to offer patients an hour or two to rest in the afternoon. Among the possible measures: dim the lights, ask nurses and doctors to enter rooms only for urgent care, and not allow visits during that time of day.

**More information:** "Room for improvement: noise on a maternity ward." *BMC Health Services Research* 2014, 14:604 [DOI: 10.1186/s12913-014-0604-3](#)

Provided by McGill University

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