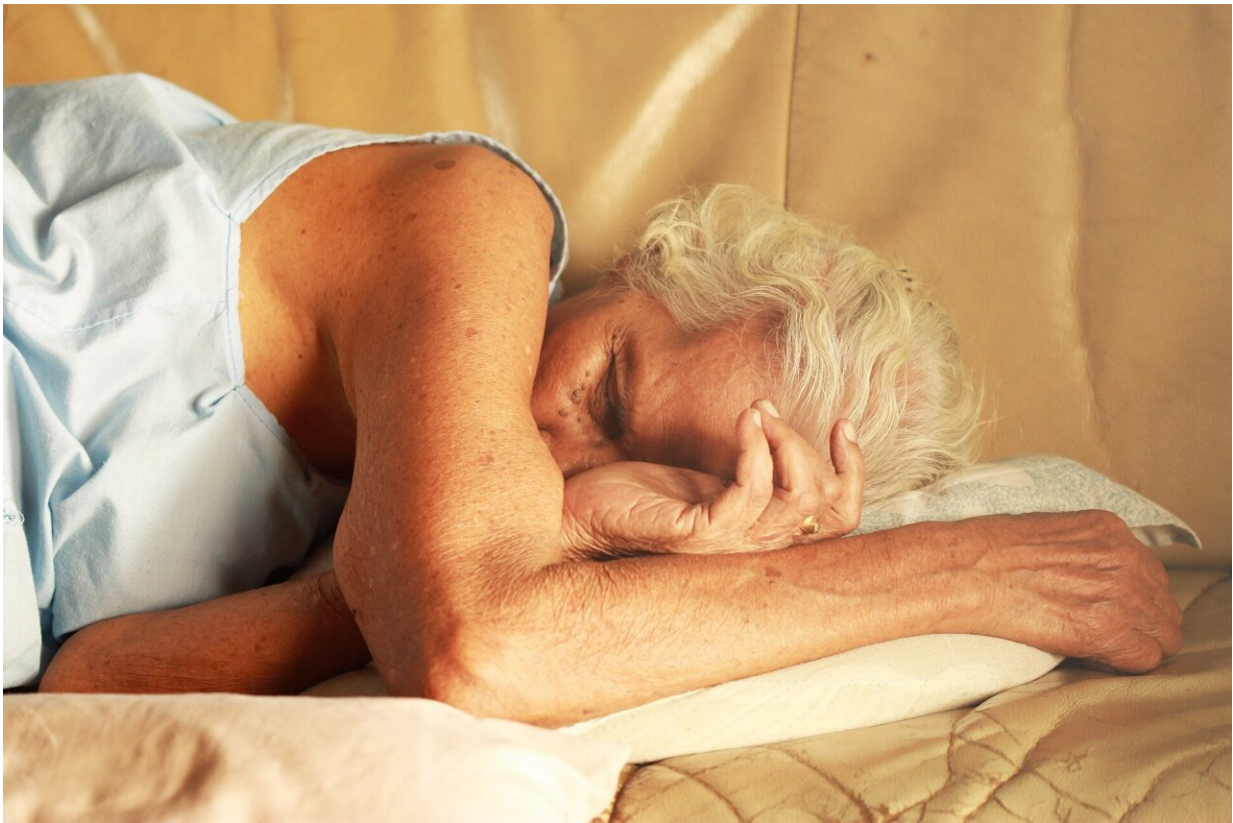


Improving quality of life and sleep in people with memory problems without using drugs

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A study from the University of Pennsylvania School of Nursing (Penn Nursing), recently [published](#) in *Innovation in Aging*, has shown promising results in improving the quality of life (QOL) and sleep

quality in individuals living with memory problems. The research delves into the efficacy of a nonpharmacological approach in a trial known as the Healthy Patterns Sleep Program.

Nancy Hodgson, Ph.D., RN, FAAN, the Claire M. Fagin Leadership Professor in Nursing and Chair of Department of Biobehavioral Health Sciences, led a group of researchers from Penn Nursing, Penn Medicine, Rutgers School of Nursing, and Drexel University's College of Nursing and Health Professions, in the study involving 209 pairings of community-residing individuals with memory problems and their care partners.

Participants were assigned to either the Healthy Patterns Sleep Program, which consisted of one-hour home activity sessions administered over four weeks, or a control group that received sleep hygiene training, plus education on home safety and health promotion. The Healthy Patterns Sleep Program trained care partners in timed [daily activities](#) such as reminiscence in the morning, exercise in the afternoon and sensory activities in the evening that can decrease [daytime sleepiness](#) and improve nighttime sleep quality.

"The results from this study provide fundamental new knowledge regarding the effects of timing activity participation and can lead to structured, replicable treatment protocols to address sleep disturbances," said Hodgson. "Overall, the Healthy Patterns program resulted in improved QOL compared to an attention-control group."

The findings also indicate that, compared to a [control group](#), the four-week Healthy Patterns program improved sleep quality among persons living with memory issues who had [depressive symptoms](#) or poor sleep quality. The study indicates the Healthy Patterns Intervention might need a longer dose to induce improvements in other sleep-wake activity metrics.

The study, "Timed activity to minimize sleep disturbance in people with [cognitive impairment](#)," is available online. Its significance lies in its confirmation of the effectiveness of behavioral interventions in not only improving [quality of life](#) and addressing sleep quality issues in this population, but also potentially reducing care partner burden and overall care costs for persons living at home with memory problems.

More information: Nancy A Hodgson et al, Timed Activity to Minimize Sleep Disturbance in People With Cognitive Impairment, *Innovation in Aging* (2023). [DOI: 10.1093/geroni/igad132](https://doi.org/10.1093/geroni/igad132)

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