

# Researchers explore the science of sleep

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In a world first, Australian sleep experts were given just eight weeks to develop and run a sleep treatment program that diagnosed and treated more than 30 volunteers and achieved a success rate greater than 80%

Lead researcher Professor Danny Eckert and the team from Flinders

University employed cutting-edge technology and personalized clinical methods to conduct a rigorous clinical trial and treat [sleep disorders](#) through the science of sleep.

"It's been a fantastic opportunity to help people and showcase some of the new methods we are researching to diagnose and treat people's sleep disorders effectively and to also highlight nationally the range of issues poor sleep has on people's lives. We're delighted that more than 80 percent of those who completed our novel treatment program had their sleep problems resolved," says Professor Eckert.

The methods and findings are featured in SBS and SBS On Demand's new documentary series "Australia's Sleep Revolution with Dr. Michael Mosley."

Thirty participants—including Dr. Michael Mosley and high profile politicians Barnaby Joyce and Jacqui Lambie—took part in the trial, which focused on the most common sleep disorders, insomnia and [sleep apnea](#)—or a combination of both.

Professor Eckert says having research findings aired in the documentary will strengthen public awareness and understanding of the importance of good quality sleep.

"We really wanted to unpack the science behind common sleep conditions like insomnia and sleep apnea. It also highlights the shocking short- and long-term health effects posed by bad sleep—ranging from [high blood pressure](#) to increased risk of cardiovascular disease, stroke, diabetes, depression and chronic disease," says Professor Eckert.

Medical journalist and chronic insomnia sufferer Dr. Michael Mosley took part in the trial himself, saying, "I was very keen to work with the Flinders team, who are world class, and to take part in this world-first

clinical trial as an observer, but also a participant. It was a joyful experience, and I learnt a surprising amount, not only about the science of sleep, but also the real causes of my own insomnia. A truly eye-opening series which I do hope will have a huge impact."

Starting with a novel diagnostic approach that featured a range of state-of-the-art diagnostic and monitoring technology captured in the laboratory and home environment, each participant's sleep was assessed. What followed were weekly multidisciplinary team meetings combining sleep scientists, doctors and psychologists to ensure that each person received the best tailored treatment solution according to their specific needs.

Professor Eckert says scientific findings will shortly be published in detail in an international peer-reviewed journal.

The three-part series exposes the magnitude of Australia's growing sleep crisis—with up to 40% of the population experiencing inadequate sleep, an estimated 15% suffering from chronic [insomnia](#) and approximately 20% of people fitting the diagnosis for sleep apnea.

Provided by Flinders University

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