

Sleep warning for older men

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Men aged 65 and over should monitor their sleep patterns and seek medical advice after a warning from Flinders University experts that disrupted slumber can be linked to cognitive dysfunction.

In a new article published in the *Journal of Sleep Research*, the Adelaide Institute for Sleep Health research group studied a group of 477 middle-aged and older men's attention and processing speed in relation to their sleep.

The participants from the Florey Adelaide Male Ageing Study undertook cognitive testing and a successful sleep study.

"Less deep sleep and more light sleep is related to slower responses on cognitive function tests," says lead author Jesse Parker.

"While obstructive sleep apnoea itself is not directly related to cognitive function in all men studied, we did note that in men aged 65 and older, more light sleep was related to worse attention and processing speed."

Senior author of the study, Flinders Associate Professor Andrew Vakulin, says the results

suggest that day-to-day activities that rely on optimal attention and cognitive speed such as driving, physical activities and walking might be affected by the encroachment of poor sleep.

Medical Director of the research group, Professor Robert Adams, says decreasing deep sleep as people age is associated with cognition. This emphasizes the importance of ongoing research looking at ways to stimulate [deep sleep](#) as a means of slowing cognitive decline with age.

Further longitudinal investigation is needed to connect poor sleep and sleep apnoea with future changes in sleep patterns and cognitive decline as well as general microarchitectural changes in older people's [sleep patterns](#).

More information: Jesse L. Parker et al, Sleep macroarchitecture but not obstructive sleep apnea is independently associated with cognitive function in only older men of a population-based cohort, *Journal of Sleep Research* (2021). [DOI: 10.1111/jsr.13370](https://doi.org/10.1111/jsr.13370)

Provided by Flinders University

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