

Everything Wellbeing: Sleep

 Reading time: ~4 minutes

Welcome to the first post of our new blog series: ***Everything Wellbeing***.

Each edition, we'll explore a core aspect of well-being for doctors and healthcare professionals, starting with something we all need more of: **SLEEP**.

Why Are We So Bad at Sleep?

We live in a society that's constantly sleep-deprived, and honestly, I find that a little strange.

Sleep is one of the most natural things we do. When we're born, we cry... and then we sleep. So why do we need apps, gadgets, sleepcasts, and endless advice to help us do something so basic?

My Sleep Struggles as an Emergency Doctor

Lately, I've been reading up on sleep, mainly because I'm terrible at it.

Working an unsociable ED rota doesn't help. While most people are asleep, I'm making high-stakes decisions about unwell patients... powered by six cups of coffee.

As a child, I never had issues sleeping (my mum would say I slept too much!). But since becoming a doctor, sleep has become a daily challenge.

I expected some level of deprivation. I saw my dad, also a doctor, leave for the hospital at odd hours. But I didn't realise how much the **lack of sleep would impact my well-being**.

When I hit a rough patch, the very first thing my therapist asked was:

"How's your sleep?"

My answer? **Abysmal**.

What's Ruining My Sleep?

After some reflection, here's what I've learned about why my sleep suffers:

1. Shift Work & Rota Chaos

Night shifts wreck my circadian rhythm. Erratic shifts mean I don't have a consistent sleep or wake-up time.

2. Screen Time

I scroll in bed far too often. What starts as a quick check turns into 3 AM cooking videos and midnight snack cravings!

Why It Matters

When I don't sleep, I become a grumpier, slower, less focused version of myself, and I don't even like that version.

Over time, I've realised that sleep isn't just a nice-to-have, it's essential to function well:

- As a doctor
 - As a husband
 - As a human being
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What's Helping Me Sleep Better

It's a work in progress, but I've started prioritising sleep. Here's what I've changed:

- ✓ Leaving my phone outside the bedroom
- ✓ Winding down with guided meditation
- ✓ Avoiding caffeine after 5 PM
- ✓ Resetting my rhythm quickly post-night shifts


These small shifts have helped me get better rest, and I feel the difference.

Why Doctors Need to Take Sleep Seriously

As doctors, we're juggling night shifts, exams, training applications, and life. Sleep often takes the back seat. But it's one of the **main pillars of well-being**..

Great Resources on Sleep

Here are some brilliant resources that helped me and might help you too:

1.  [YouTube – Dr. Mike Farquhar](#)
Consultant in Sleep Medicine explaining fatigue in doctors.

2. 🎙️ [The Happiness Lab Podcast – Laurie Santos](#)
A conversation on sleep and burnout with Arianna Huffington.
 3. 📄 [BMA Guide – Managing Sleep and Night Shifts](#)
Evidence-based advice tailored to healthcare professionals.
 4. 🎧 [Rhythm Check Podcast – PSW East of England](#)
A homegrown podcast just for us—Episode 1 is all about sleep.
 5. 📺 [YouTube – Dr. Francesca Crawley](#)
Simple tips and clear science around sleep improvement.
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❤️ **Final Thoughts: Sleep is Safety**

There's growing evidence linking sleep deprivation to:

- Increased cardiovascular risk
- Poor immune function
- Diabetes and even early-onset dementia

Getting 7–8 hours of sleep isn't a luxury; it's a necessity.

"A well-rested doctor is a safe and efficient doctor."

🧑‍🏫 **Your Sleep Challenge This Week**

Reflect on your current sleep routine:

What's one small change you could make to prioritise rest?

Maybe it's putting your phone away earlier, using blackout curtains, or simply saying no to that post-night-shift espresso.

If you've dozed off halfway through this, no hard feelings, maybe you needed the nap!



🌙 **Until Next Time...**

Take care of yourself, so you can take great care of others.

Sweet dreams and good nights ahead!

Warm Regards

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