



Rounded with a sleep

Thinking about
your own health
when working
shifts and nights



Dr Michael Farquhar
Consultant in Sleep Medicine
Evelina London Children's Hospital

DOZING DOCS Four in ten junior doctors admit to falling asleep at the wheel after a night shift, study claims

Some workers have fatally crashed into other vehicles while others have reported near misses with oncoming traffic

BY SUN REPORTER | 23rd January 2017, 1:56 am

Working nights is essential in the NHS, but it has consequences, not least for your own health. Many doctors and nurses have had the experience of falling asleep, or feeling as if they are driving unsafely, after a night shift.

Daily Record



Worked to death - exhausted young doctor veers off road and dies after gruelling nightshift



BBC

NEWS

Dr Ronak Patel 'had been singing to stay awake' before fatal crash



Nurse banned from driving after crashing on way home from nightshift

GILLIAN Pick has been banned from the road after crashing her car into another vehicle following a nightshift where she had no breaks, her lawyer told Ayr Sheriff Court.

At its worst that can have serious, and sometimes fatal, consequences. These stories are all relatively recent, and are the tip of an iceberg. These factors can impact both staff and patient safety.

"A strong sense of organisational values, embedded throughout the organisation, can provide the foundations for clinical workers engagement; With trusts coming under growing pressure, engaging all healthcare workers in decision-making and innovation will become increasingly important. Even with good clinical practice we can always look at how we can do things better."



Ian Abbs
Medical Director



Thinking about your own health when working shifts and nights

Sleep is fundamental to good health.

Healthcare professionals receive little teaching on the importance of sleep, particularly with respect to their own health when working night shifts.

Knowledge of basic sleep physiology, together with simple strategies to improve core sleep and the ability to cope with working nights, can result in significant improvements both for healthcare professionals, but also for the patients they care for.

[http://guysandstthomaseducation.com/
project/sleep-looking-after-your-wellbeing/](http://guysandstthomaseducation.com/project/sleep-looking-after-your-wellbeing/)



This webpage on the GSTT Medical Education website has further information on this topic, including tips and strategies for healthcare workers and employers to reduce these risks

BBC
ONE

inside out
south



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=z4vv3HuKjcY&feature=youtu.be>

It also includes this short 10 minute video report, from BBC Inside Out South, which shows a doctor driving under simulated conditions after a normal night shift. Its conclusions are powerful.

Fifteen-minute consultation on managing the effects of shift work on your health

Michael Farquhar

“You’re not healthy unless your sleep is healthy”
Professor William Dement, Stanford
University, one of the founders of
modern sleep medicine

Correspondence to
Dr Michael Farquhar,
Department of Children’s Sleep
Medicine, Evelina London
Children’s Hospital, Guy’s and
St Thomas’ NHS Foundation
Trust, London SE1 7EH, UK;
Michael.Farquhar@gstt.nhs.uk;
@DrMikeFarquhar

**[http://ep.bmj.com/content/early/2016/12/16/
archdischild-2016-312119.abstract](http://ep.bmj.com/content/early/2016/12/16/archdischild-2016-312119.abstract)**

More information is available in this paper, in the Education and Practice edition of Archives of Disease in Childhood. It sets out the reasons why this is important, and offers suggestions both to those working shifts, but also to employers, about managing the effects of working at night on your health and performance.



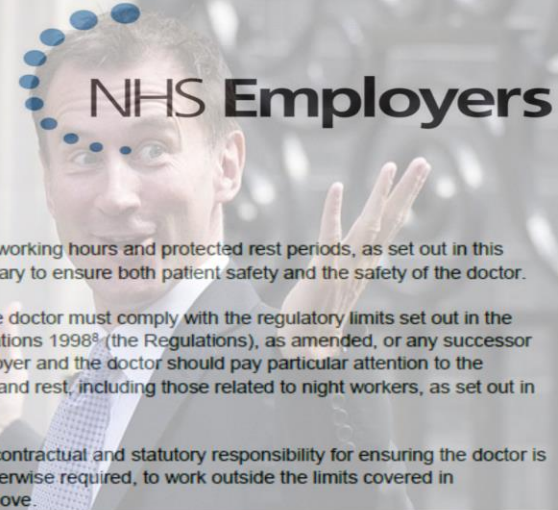
The single most important point is this: breaks on night shifts are essential, both for your own safety, and for that of the patients you are looking after. They are not a luxury. Fatigue can have a major impact on the care we deliver. Regular rest helps to reduce that.



London School of Paediatrics

SCHEDULE 03

WORKING HOURS



Principles

1. Contractual limits on working hours and protected rest periods, as set out in this schedule, are necessary to ensure both patient safety and the safety of the doctor.
2. The employer and the doctor must comply with the regulatory limits set out in the Working Time Regulations 1998⁹ (the Regulations), as amended, or any successor legislation. The employer and the doctor should pay particular attention to the safeguards on hours and rest, including those related to night workers, as set out in the Regulations¹.
3. The employer has a contractual and statutory responsibility for ensuring the doctor is not contracted, or otherwise required, to work outside the limits covered in paragraph 1 and 2 above.

Night time shift work and the new junior doctor contract

📅 March 1, 2017 by [Camilla Kingdon](#) 💬

Implementation of the new Junior Doctor contract is continuing and within London Paediatrics next week's post switchover is the first time we will experience it first hand.

<http://www.londonpaediatrics.co.uk/all-news/night-time-shift-work-and-the-new-junior-doctor-contract/>

The new junior doctor contract contains specific provisions relating to rest, breaks and sleep after night shifts. This piece on the LSP webpage provides advice on using the contract's provisions to try to make things better.



Michael.Farquhar@gstt.nhs.uk

 @DrMikeFarquhar



Dr Mike Farquhar is a consultant in sleep medicine at the Evelina London Children's Hospital, and has a particular interest in the effects of working at night on NHS staff. He can be contacted via Twitter or email to discuss any questions you may have or queries relating to effects of shift working.