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World-first app by Australia helps shift workers get better sleep

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SleepSync is entirely tailored to the individual user by providing biologically viable recommendations for sleep timing



Australia's Monash University researchers have developed a world-first personalised app to improve the sleep and mood of vital shift workers.

During the pandemic, shift workers kept the world functioning. The healthcare shift workers helped many of us survive the pandemic's deadly effects.

Turner Institute for Brain and Mental Health researchers have developed SleepSync, the world's first app that personalises sleep-wake cycles for shift workers to improve their sleep and overall mood.

It saw 27 shift workers trial the app over a two-week period; mainly intensive care and emergency department nurses at high risk of shift work disorder, commonly experienced as insomnia and excessive sleepiness.

SleepSync improved total sleep time, ability to fall asleep, sleep quality and perception of recovery on days off. With the app considering each individual's daily routine, 70 percent reported it was easier to fall asleep, and more than 80 per cent reported better quality sleep. Participants slept an average 29 minutes longer each night.

"SleepSync aims to aid behavioural change and provide practical advice to shift workers by providing personalised sleep scheduling recommendations and education. This has the potential to improve shift workers' health and wellbeing and how they function day to day. It also has the potential for development and integration with wearable devices, such as smartwatches, and further help minimise the health costs associated with shift work to society", said the researchers.