How do firefighters sleep during wildfire suppression?
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Overview: To curtail the spread of bushfire, Australia’s firefighters often work long hours with little rest between consecutive shifts. However, there is no information on a firefighters sleep quantity and quality during multi-day wildfire suppression. Inadequate sleep increases the likelihood of impaired performance that can result in higher error and incident rates which in turn impact safety and efficiency.

Aim: To determine firefighters’ sleep quantity and quality throughout multi-day campaign fires and planned burns.

Preliminary results: Ten firefighters wore activity monitors and completed sleep and work diaries for a period of four weeks during the 2012/13 wildfire season. Firefighters obtained less total sleep and reported increases in pre- and post-sleep fatigue levels during periods of wildfire suppression when compared to periods of no fire suppression.

Implications: A greater understanding of firefighters’ sleep behaviour will assist in the management of fatigue-related risk through appropriate scheduling of work hours and sleep opportunities.

We need your help!
Who do we need? ~50 firefighters across Australia for the upcoming fire season (employed or volunteers)
What is involved?
• Wear a wrist activity monitor for 3-days pre-deployment, during a campaign fire or a planned burn and 3-days post-deployment
• Wear a shirt pocket activity monitor during fire suppression
• Complete a sleep and work diary

Please take a flyer below if you are interested in participating