Light-Dark and Activity Rhythm Therapy for sleep: Feasibility and acceptability in Schizophrenia spectrum disorders (L-DART FitSz)

Research team:
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What is L-DART?

Light-Dark and Activity Rhythm Therapy is a new therapy we have developed to improve sleep in people with schizophrenia spectrum disorders. It involves working on the rhythms of light and dark exposure (because we know that affects the body clock), and the type and timing of daily activities (because we know daytime activity affects sleep). It involves changes to lifestyle and routines for the participant.

It is delivered by an occupational therapist, and takes 6-9 sessions and 3-6 phone calls, spaced over 12 weeks. It is quite personalised, and the goals we set will depend on the person’s interests, priorities and situation.

It also involves the person tracking their own progress using an activity tracker watch (it doesn’t track where you are just how active you are), and viewing their activity in the L-DART app. It also uses light sensors, to see when you are exposed to light.

Who are we looking for?

Main criteria (contact us for further information):

- People with a diagnosis of schizophrenia, schizoaffective disorder, delusional disorder, or schizotypal disorder.
- Who also have problems with their sleep, such as: difficulty falling asleep, not getting enough sleep, poor sleep quality, broken sleep, unrefreshing sleep, sleep timing which they are not happy with (e.g. erratically timed, too early or too late sleep).
- In contact with GMMH or Pennine Care services

(ALSO SURVEYS): We are also recruiting staff and service users to anonymously complete a related online survey.

Is there any payment?

We pay for participant’s time completing the measures, £10, on 3 occasions (£10 x3). Most of the time is spent receiving the therapy or doing the homework tasks, so most of the time participants are not paid for.

What is involved if I take part?

All participants will receive the therapy (L-DART). There are study measures (questionnaires) at the beginning, middle and end. There is an interview about the person’s experience of L-DART, with another researcher, which will be audio recorded and typed up. The whole study is 30 weeks.

We will ask you to wear a Withings Move activity tracker watch, which you get to keep (you choose the colours). For shorter periods we will also ask you to wear an ‘actigraphy’ watch with a light sensor.

What are the benefits and risks?

You will receive an activity tracking watch and wake-up light alarm, and if relevant a light box, blackout curtains and net curtains.

It is possible that some of the changes designed to improve your sleep in the long term might mean you get less sleep in the short term. Light boxes can give people eye-strain or headache, but this should go away if you stop using it or reduce the amount of use. Shortening time in bed and increasing light exposure could possibly cause mania, so far research shows this is rare, but we will monitor this especially if you have had mania before.

For full information, including how we protect participant confidentiality, we have a Participant Information Sheet, see below.

Where can I find more information?

We are happy to post you more info, or answer questions, please ask!

You can find information and a video here: www.sleepOT.org/l-dart-fitsz

Surveys: Staff- ls.gd/LDARTstaff  Service users- redcap.link/L-DARTsurvey