

## **Abstract for Sleep Conference 2015**

### **Can reading to children before lights out help children sleep? - a pilot study**

Dr Naomi Hynd, Professor Jason Ellis, Dr Thomas Meyer, Dr Dave Lee, Professor Mark Freeston

Sleep difficulties in children are common and can lead to a number of physical and mental health problems if left untreated. Most interventions to date have involved parental education or group work, which can be costly, time consuming and requires expertise. Given the current financial stressors in the NHS, reading, as part of the bedtime routine, may be a cheap and straightforward approach. Previous research in this field is extremely limited but has provided some evidence for improvement in children up to 7 years of age. The current study aimed to explore the benefits of reading, as part of a bedtime routine, and expand the evidence-base with older children. Six children aged between 8-10 years of age were recruited to the study and five completed the treatment phase. An experimental design, using multiple baselines, within a single-case methodology was used. Objective measurement was provided by Actigraphy. Analysis of completers (N=5) indicated that reading, as part of a bedtime routine, helped to improve a number of sleep parameters, including Sleep Onset Latency and Wake After Sleep Onset. It was concluded that reading, as part of a bedtime routine, for children up to 10 years of age, could be considered as a potential low cost intervention for sleep problems. A number of other factors, such as bedtime routine and the sleep book itself, could have influenced these findings. Further replication and extension of the study is therefore required before the specific benefits of reading, as part of a bedtime routine, can be established.

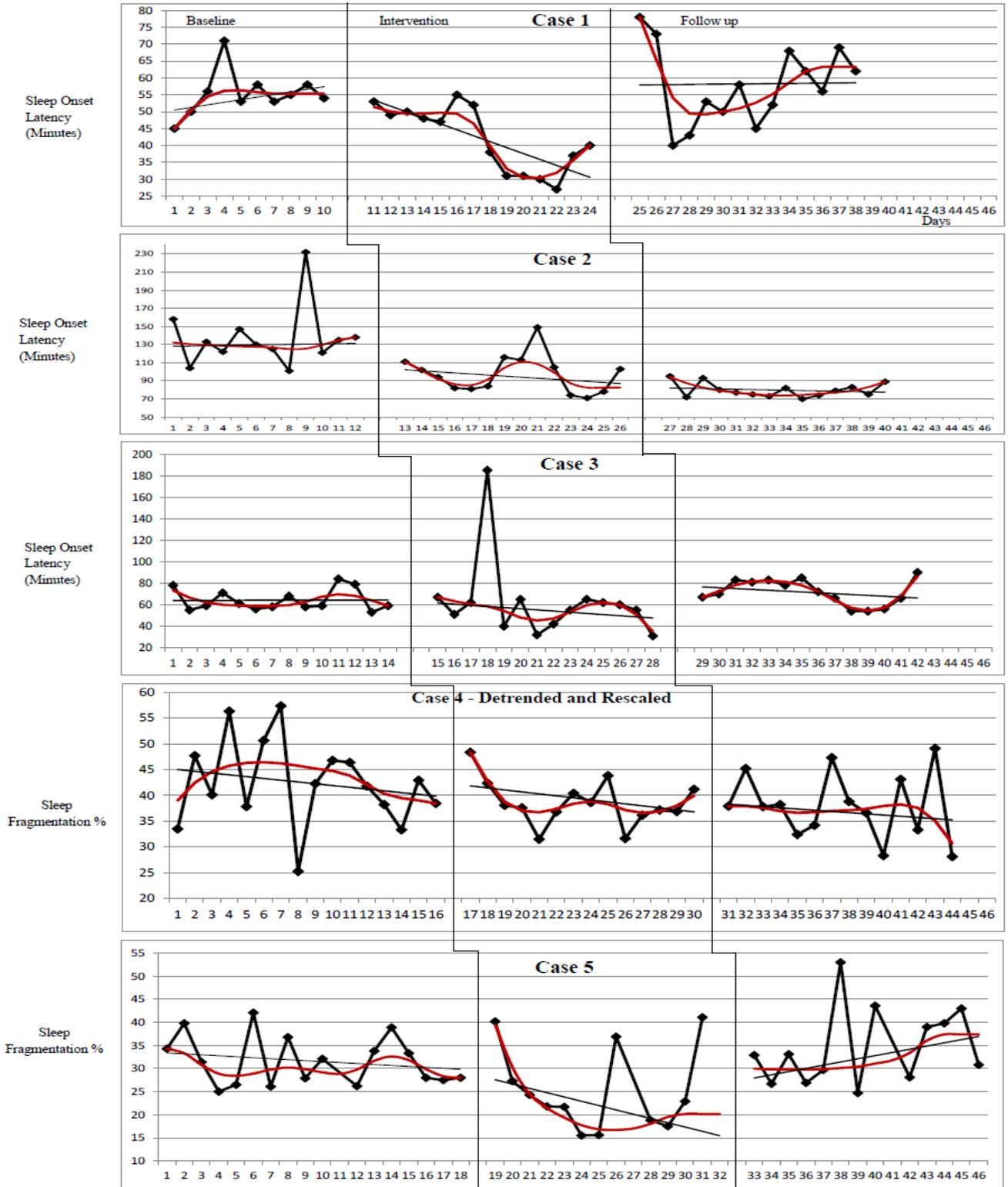


Figure 1. Graphs for Primary Sleep Problems across time for all participants ( $N=5$ ).

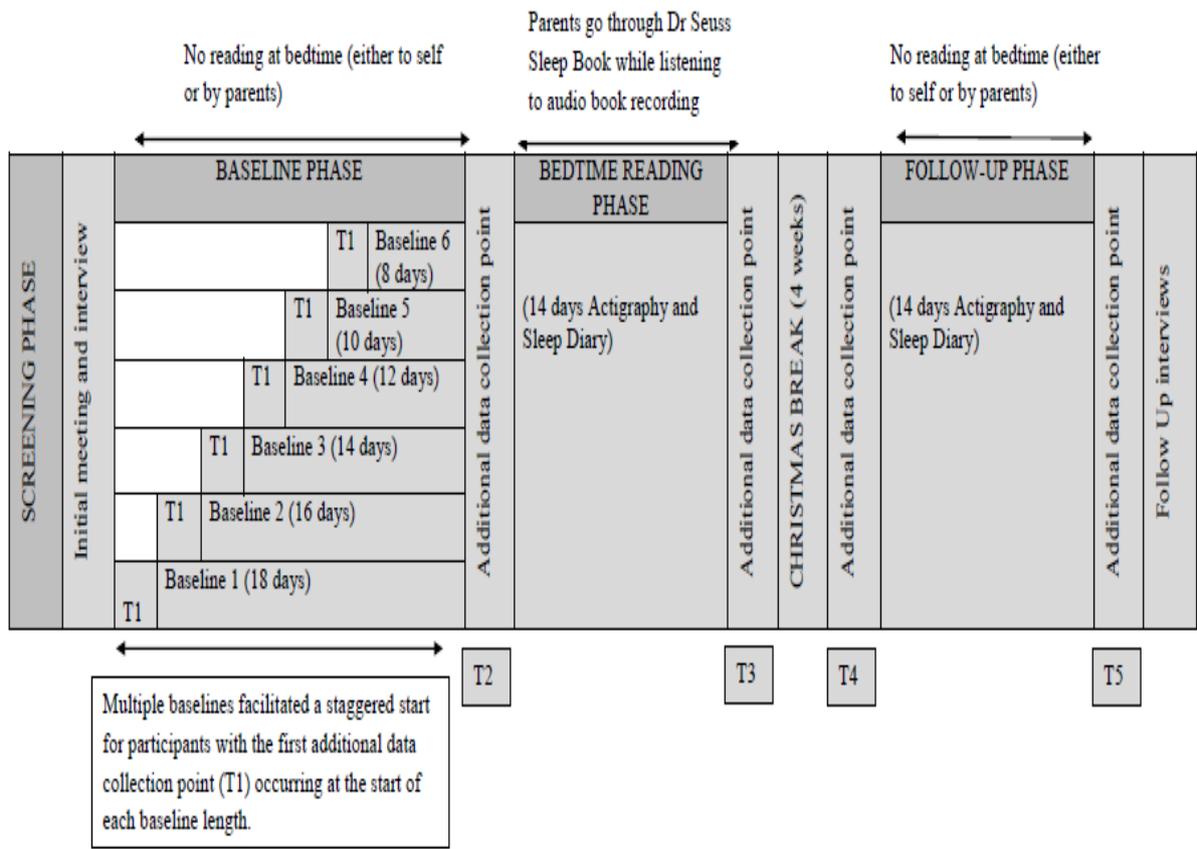


Figure 2. Study Design showing different phases of the study