

NSWO'S YEAR IN REVIEW

2025



Dutch Society for Sleep-
Wake Research

Nederlandse Vereniging voor
Slaap- en Waakonderzoek



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PREFACE



Dear NSWO members,

I am proud to present the 2025 NSWO Year in Review, an impressive overview of what has been happening in our society and sleep research. We had a fantastic edition of SLAAP 2025 in Veldhoven, came together at an inspiring spring symposium and have awarded multiple prizes and grants awarded to talented researchers this year. Preparation for co-hosting Sleep Europe 2026 in Maastricht is also in full swing.

The year 2025 also saw three NSWO researchers publishing their PhD-thesis. Reading these we can see how broad the field of sleep research is in the Netherlands. From advancing sleep scoring with automated tools, to sleep and circadian rhythms in ADHD and a thorough investigation of disorders of hypersomnolence, the work of Jaap van der Aar, Emma van Anandel and Jari Gool sheds new light on sleep and rhythms. Very worthwhile to read more about in this year's edition.

I also want to emphasize that everything the NSWO does could not be done without the involvement of many volunteers, well worth an extra round of applause. A specific thank you to Marieke Vringer, Ploon de Potter en Keetje Voogd, and all others of the PR committee for making the 2025 Year in Review possible. Additionally, I like to thank all the members of the different committees and the board, without their work we would come to a standstill. But most of all, thank you for being a member of the NSWO, without you we cannot bring sleep and wake research in the Netherlands forward – let's continue our mission!

Annemarie Luik
NSWO President

AIMS OF THE NSWO

The NSWO (Dutch Society for Sleep-Wake Research) was founded in *June 1990*. The NSWO is an independent society consisting of and aimed at professionals in the field of sleep and sleep disorders. We bring together sleep researchers, physicians, and supporting staff working in the area of sleep and sleep disorders and promote the exchange of knowledge and expertise regarding the functions and mechanisms of sleep, including sleep disorders and their treatment.

Aims of the NSWO

- 1. Encouraging interaction and knowledge transfer between researchers and clinicians working with sleep and sleep disorders*
- 2. Serving as a professional advisory body for the government, health care organizations and institutes*
- 3. Providing information about sleep and sleep disorders to the general public in the Netherlands*
- 4. Facilitating and promoting scientific research in the field of sleep*
- 5. Maintaining contact with patients organisations and (international) scientific societies*

BOARD

The NSWO's board consists of 7 motivated members, who fulfill the role of president, secretary, treasurer or chair of one of the four committees of the NSWO. Later in this report, the various committees are introduced.



**ANNEMARIE LUIJCK,
PRESIDENT**



**SEBASTIAAN OVEREEM,
SECRETARY**



**KARIN VAN RIJN,
TREASURER**



**MAX LAANSMA,
CHAIR EDUCATIONAL COMMITTEE**



**JOYCE REESEN,
CHAIR EARLY CAREER SCIENTISTS**



**DENISE BIJLENGA,
CHAIR SCIENTIFIC COMMITTEE**



**TOM BRESSER,
CHAIR PR COMMITTEE**

NSWO RECOMMENDATIONS: UPDATES

One of the NSWO's aims is "to serve as a professional advisory body for the government, health care organizations and institutes". In this role, the NSWO helps formulate guidelines for clinicians. In 2025, two updates were released:

MELATONIN USE

The Melatonin workgroup, consisting of somnologists and scientists, have updated their recommendations on the use of melatonin in clinical practice. Particularly, guidelines on the usage of melatonin in a pediatric population and in a hospital setting were specified. Please find the complete guidelines [here](#).

REM-SLEEP BEHAVIOUR DISORDER

The Dutch RBD Working Group has published a new practical guidance document on the care and management of isolated REM sleep behaviour disorder (iRBD). Given the elevated risk of developing an alpha-synucleinopathy (such as Parkinson's disease or Lewy body dementia) in this patient group, recommendations are formulated on how and when healthcare professionals should communicate this prognosis to patients, including considerations around the psychosocial impact of risk communication. The full document is available [here](#).

WEBSITE ARTICLES: LUCID DREAMING

Together with science-journalist Susanne de Joode, the NSWO developed 3 very fun and informative articles that were published on the NSWO's website in 2025. This time, the themed revolved around something exciting and mysterious: Lucid Dreaming! In collaboration with Emma Peters, lucid dreaming researcher at the University of Bern, we published a three-part series on lucid dreaming, taking a closer look at this fascinating phenomenon from different angles.

In '[Lucide dromen: het fenomeen](#)', we introduce lucid dreaming as a state in which you become aware that you are dreaming, sometimes even gaining a degree of control over the dream. The article explores how often lucid dreams occur and what makes them unique.

In '[Lucide dromen: het onderzoek](#)' we take a closer look at how lucid dreaming is studied in the lab. For example, the article explains how researchers make use of specific eye movement signals during REM sleep to communicate with dreamers, and what this reveals about consciousness and brain activity during sleep.

In the final article, '[Lucide dromen: de praktijk](#)', we turn to the question of whether and how people can learn to lucid dream themselves. Techniques such as reality checks and keeping a dream diary are discussed, alongside a balanced view on potential benefits, like reducing nightmares, and the limitations of these methods.



CLICK [HERE](#) TO EXPLORE
MORE ON NSWO'S WEBSITE

PIET VISSER POSTER AWARDS

This year, **the Piet Visser Poster prize** was awarded at SLAAP2025. The prize consists of a trophy with a small bronze statue that depicts ‘Strive for the highest’. The winner’s name is engraved on the statue, joining the names of all previous winners. Piet Visser (1919-2009) was an honorary member of the NSWO and one of the founders of the society. The Piet Visser Poster prize is awarded by a designated panel of judges based on the scientific quality of the research and the poster presentation. An **Audience prize** is also awarded to the poster with the most votes from the audience.

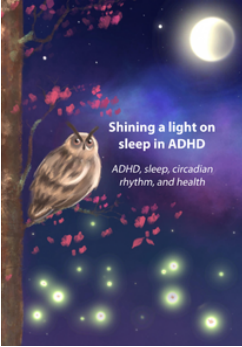


Jingru Zhou won the Piet Visser poster prize at SLAAP2025 for her poster “Corticotropin-Releasing Hormone (CRH) in Murine Narcolepsy: What Do Genetic and Immune Models Tell Us?”. In this study, CRH expression was examined in three mouse models of narcolepsy type 1, representing genetic orexin loss, toxin-induced orexin neuron ablation, and immune-mediated orexin neuron destruction. Surprisingly, CRH mRNA levels remained unchanged in both the hypothalamus and amygdala, despite robust orexin neuron loss. These findings suggest that current mouse models do not fully reproduce the CRH alterations reported in human narcolepsy type 1, and highlight the need for further research into species-specific or disease-stage-dependent mechanisms.

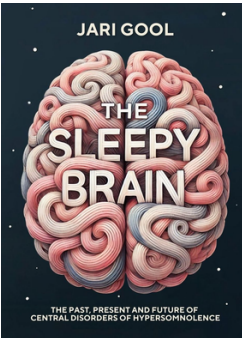
The audience poster prize was awarded to **Miriam van der Velde** for the poster titled “The Quiet hours? Observing Nighttime Life and Factors Affecting Sleep in Geriatric Care Settings”. This study explored the complex nighttime context of geriatric care and its impact on older adults’ sleep. Through twelve participant observations across a hospital ward and rehabilitation facilities, Miriam and her colleagues identified how environmental, organizational, and interpersonal factors interact. Four key themes emerged: the nocturnal environment, balancing care and sleep, the shared night, and the vulnerable night. Sleep was frequently disrupted by light, noise, and care activities, particularly in hospital settings. More restful nights were associated with private rooms, flexible routines, and continuity of care, highlighting opportunities for context-sensitive improvements.



HORA EST: DISSERTATIONS OF 2025



Emma van Andel's thesis '*Shining a light on sleep in ADHD: ADHD, sleep, circadian rhythm, and health*' contributes to the growing insight into the complex relationship between Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) and sleep problems, with a particular focus on a delayed circadian rhythm and the effects of treatment of Delayed Sleep Phase Syndrome (DSPS). The findings underscore the importance of proper assessment and treatment of sleep problems in ADHD and vice versa.



Jari Gool investigated the neurobiological mechanisms underlying central disorders of hypersomnolence. His thesis, '*The Sleepy Brain*', integrates neuroimaging, post-mortem immunohistochemistry, epidemiology, and clinical phenotyping to characterize disease heterogeneity and identify biomarkers. Key findings include identifying structural and functional brain differences between disorders, linking narcolepsy incidence to preceding influenza season patterns, and using data-driven clustering to uncover biologically meaningful patient subgroups. Additionally, his work highlights opioids as a potential treatment avenue for narcolepsy type 1.



Jaap van der Aar defended his thesis '*Optimizing automated sleep staging*' in which he investigated how wearable sleep monitoring technologies and automated sleep stage classification models can be optimized for clinical populations with sleep disorders. His work showed that adapting models to specific sensors, patient groups, and individuals improves sleep staging performance and supports the use of wearable technologies for long-term sleep monitoring. It also demonstrates how advanced probability-based analysis can provide new insights into sleep disorders such as RBD.

You can access the full dissertations by clicking on the cover art.



SPRING SYMPOSIUM 2025

EARLY CAREER GRANT

Lucija: Thanks to the NSW Early Career Grant, I was able to attend *The European Association for Behavioural and Cognitive Therapies (EABCT)* congress in Glasgow (3-6 September 2025), where I presented my talk “When sleep fails to heal: The role of noradrenaline in overnight distress resolution.” I shared findings from our ongoing project at the Netherlands Institute for Neuroscience on how noradrenaline during sleep influences the way we process distress overnight. It was eye-opening to see how underrepresented sleep research still is in the broader mental health field — which made it all even more rewarding to bring our work to this audience. I also had the pleasure of connecting with co-speakers studying emotional memory from both lab and clinical settings and left Glasgow with useful feedback, new connections, and a renewed motivation to advocate for sleep as a key part of mental health. Thank you NSW for making this possible!

The Early Career Grant

At the spring symposium, two early career researchers were awarded the NSW Early Career Grant, to support researchers presenting their work at a conference, visiting a foreign lab, or attending a sleep-wake research course. This year's lucky recipients were Lucija Blaževski and Fanxiang Mao!

Fangxiang: My research focuses on women's sleep during pregnancy, an important but still relatively understudied topic. Our work suggests that good sleep is closely connected to successful reproduction and better health during the perinatal period. At the same time, I am very aware that my work still has limitations. That is why I appreciate the opportunity NSW has given me to attend the Dutch Brain Science Conference, the European College of Neuropsychopharmacology Congress, and the European Sleep Research Society. These experiences have been truly inspiring. I was introduced to innovative methods such as EEG and MRI to track brain activity during specific tasks. I was also inspired by perspectives from other disciplines, which pushed me to think about how ideas and methods from other fields might enrich my own research. I am sincerely grateful to NSW for this support. Without this financial support, I would not have had these valuable opportunities to reflect on my current work in a broader scientific context. More importantly, these experiences have made me feel even more proud of the work I do on sleep.



MEET: EARLY CAREER SCIENTISTS (ECS) COMMITTEE



**JOYCE REESEN
(CHAIR)**



**ABDEL
RAYAN**



**SANNE
HOEPEL**



MARIEKE VRINGER



EVA VAN HEESE



DANIQUE ZANTINGE

Hi all! We are the ECS of the NSWO and our aim is to connect early career researchers within the NSWO. We organize various activities, including workshops and network events. In 2025, we organized a workshop for pitch presenting with the help from Annemarie Luik (click [here](#) for more information), an interactive infographic workshop (see [here](#)), and brought young researchers together during the SLAAP2025 conference. We were also involved in the organization of the spring symposium in the WKZ, which was a great succes! We are looking forward to meet new (early career) researchers during the ESRS 2026 in Maastricht!



A huge thanks to Jari Gool for his commitment to the committee in the past years. We wish him all the best in the next chapter of his career. As several other members are also transitioning into new career stages, we are happy to welcome Danique Zantinge and Keetje Voogd. For 2026, we are still looking for enthusiastic Early Career Scientists to join us.

MEET: EDUCATION COMMITTEE (EDUCIE)



**MAX LAANSMA
(CHAIR)**



ROLF FRONCZEK



**SHANNA VAN
TRIGT**



**SOPHIE
SCHUBERT**



**MONA
KLAU**

Each year, our committee co-organizes the Spring Symposium with the Early Career Scientists committee, inviting research groups to showcase their work. For the 2025 edition, we partnered with the SVNL and Vereniging Kind en Slaap (VKS) to host a focused symposium at the Wilhelmina Kinderziekenhuis, exploring sleep from the prenatal stage through adulthood and bridging the gap between basic science and therapeutic practice. Another highlight of 2025 was our involvement in the International Sleep Medicine Course (ISMC), a four-day training program designed to prepare medical specialists for the annual ESRS Examination in Sleep Medicine. With participants joining from 14 countries and lively discussion throughout, the course was a success!

On the committee front, we say farewell to Mink Schinkelshoek after years of dedicated involvement and thank him for his contributions. We are excited to welcome Mona Klau to the team.

Looking ahead, preparations are well underway for the 2026 Spring Symposium on 5 June in Amsterdam. The morning will feature talks centered on the "Anatomy of Sleep", followed by an unique afternoon in the dissecting room: a rare opportunity to explore neuroanatomy firsthand. We hope to see you there!

MEET: SCIENCE COMMITTEE (WETCIE)



DENISE BIJLENGA
(CHAIR)



RAYMOND NOORDAM
(NEW CHAIR)



**ANNE-SOPHIE
KONING**



**DIRK JAN
STENVERS**



MEREL VAN GILST



LAURA KERVEZEE



LARA RÖSLER



EMMA VAN ANDEL

The Science Committee of the NSWO aims to promote the general scientific objectives of the NSWO, such as stimulating knowledge exchange among sleep researchers, providing sleep-related education, and advancing scientific sleep research in the Netherlands. The committee meets every six weeks. In 2025, the agenda was primarily focused on the organization of SLAAP2025 in Veldhoven, for which Raymond (chair) and Merel were delegates. At the end of 2025, Denise resigned as chair of the WETCIE. Thanks a lot for the years of dedication, Denise!

In 2026, Raymond Noordam will take over as chair. The WETCIE will only have a few numbers of activities scheduled due to the organization of the Sleep Europe Conference in Maastricht. Nevertheless, the preparations for SLAAP2027 are already getting started. Stay tuned!

MEET: PUBLIC RELATIONS COMMITTEE (PRCIE)



TOM BRESSER
(CHAIR)



JASMIN KUHN



PLOON DE POTTER



VERONIQUE VAEL

The main goals of the PR Committee are to increase NSW0's visibility, maintain a consistent flow of relevant content, and serve as an accessible point of contact for all PR-related questions, both from within and outside the organization. Together with support from the ECS, we have constructed NSW0's Year in Review 2024 (and are currently working on the 2025 edition). We have also published new articles on lucid dreaming on the website - see page 7! In addition, we continue to work on updating the website and aim to make English translations of essential pages available. Finally, we kept up with World Sleep Month (March) by highlighting interesting facts and myths about sleep (check out our [LinkedIn page](#) for more)!

Looking ahead to 2026, we plan to continue highlighting interesting research happening within the NSW0, further improving the website and our outreach, and creating an overview of studies that are actively recruiting participants. As always, please don't hesitate to reach out for any communication-related matters, to feature your research on the website, or to share any suggestions you may have!

PS: IF YOU HAVE NOT ALREADY, SIGN UP FOR THE NSW0 CONTACT FORM (FOR MEDIA / STUDENT REQUESTS)



NSWO SYMPOSIA: SPRING

Spring Symposium: "Sleep from the Prenatal Stage to Adulthood: Bridging Basic Science and Clinical Interventions"

The Spring Symposium of 2025 was organized together with the SVNL and Vereniging Kind en Slaap (VKS) and was hosted at the Wilhelmina Kinderziekenhuis (WKZ) in Utrecht. Before the symposium, visitors could apply for a Neonatal Intensive Care Unit (NICU) Demonstration. The symposium consisted of several **research presentations**, and the **NSWO's Early Career Grants** were awarded to support promising researchers in presenting their work at international conferences. Want to read more about this inspiring day? Read [this article](#) on the NSWO website.



SLAAP 2025

In November 2025, the bi-annual SLAAP conference was held at NH Koningshof in Veldhoven, near Eindhoven. Set within this former monastery, the two-day event was packed with inspiring keynotes, symposia, poster sessions, blitz presentations, and even dancing!

The first day opened with the keynote 'Good Clock, Good Health' by Professor Frank Scheer from Harvard Medical School, who highlighted the importance of circadian rhythms and their clinical implications for sleep and metabolism. The keynote was followed by a first round of Poster Blitz presentations, highlighting a small selection of the 51 posters accepted for SLAAP2025.

The remainder of the day was filled with parallel sessions, leaving attendees with tough choices to make. Each session included several speakers on one topic, ranging from pediatric OSA, sleep-wake rhythms across species, and sleep in professional sports, to glymphatic brain clearance, temperature and sleep, approaches to handling sleep in first-line (GP) care, and new insights into central disorders of hypersomnolence.

The evening program started with a more formal poster reception including drinks, but by the end of the evening, everyone was partying on the brightly colored dancefloor!



Following an early-morning NSWO general assembly, Dr. Pieter Helmhout opened the second day with his keynote on warfighter fatigue management. He explained how the military uses power-nap training (and of course: coffee) to mitigate the effects of sleep deprivation and circadian disruption.

The day continued with another round of poster blitz presentations, and more parallel sessions with topics such as: nerve stimulation in sleep apnea, REM-sleep behavior disorders, sleep & nutrition interventions for dock workers, psychological treatment for insomnia, and the role of sleep in psychiatric disorders. We ended the day with some well-deserved drinks during the award ceremony. You can read all about the winners of the Piet Visser poster prize on page 7.

Overall, SLAAP2025 was an inspiring event for both clinicians and researchers. With the large variety of topics and plenty of room for networking, it was the perfect opportunity to learn and connect. We are already looking forward to the next one!

A huge thanks to the organizing committee: Dr. Raymond Noordam, Dr. Jeryll Asin, Drs. Karin van Rijn, Drs. Pauline van Hirtum, Dr. Merel van Gilst and Annick Goijarts.



THANK YOU YEAR IN REVIEW 2025

This *Year in Review 2025* will be presented at the 2026 Spring Symposium. We would like to thank everybody for contributing to this year's review, and we are looking forward to an exciting new year filled with sleep/wake research.

Are you missing anything in this review or do you have suggestions for next editions? Please reach out to the PR committee at prcie@nsw.nl



MARIEKE VRINGER



KEETJE VOOGD



PLOON DE POTTER

This edition was edited by Marieke Vringer, Keetje Voogd & Ploon de Potter