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**Sleep-Cognition-Hypothesis In maritime Pilots - The effect**  
**of long-term work-related poor sleep on cognition in**  
**healthy middle-aged men**  
**Methodology of a prospective cohort study in maritime**  
**pilots**

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### **The SCHIP study**

**Sleep-Cognition-Hypothesis In maritime Pilots** - The effect of long-term work-related poor sleep on cognition in healthy middle-aged men

*Methodology of a prospective cohort study in maritime pilots*

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## ABSTRACT

**Introduction:** Evidence indicates a bi-directional relationship between poor sleep and Alzheimer's disease (AD). While AD may lead to disruption of normal sleep, poor sleep in itself may play a causal role in the development of AD by influencing the production and/or clearance of the amyloid-beta (A $\beta$ ) protein. This led to the hypothesis that extended periods (>10 years) of disturbed sleep could lead to A $\beta$  accumulation with subsequent cognitive AD related decline.

**Objective:** To describe the methodology of the SCHIP study, a cohort study in maritime pilots that aims at investigating the relationship between chronic sleep disturbances due to an extrinsic cause (work related), cognitive function and amyloid accumulation among healthy middle-aged men to test the hypothesis that prolonged abnormal sleep behavior increases the risk of AD-related cognitive decline.

**Methods:** Our study sample consists of a group of healthy middle-aged maritime pilots, who have had irregular sleeping patterns for more than 15 years due to irregular work schedules. This chronic sleep deprivation group will be compared to a group of healthy, age and education matched controls with normal sleep. Participants will complete 10 days of actigraphy (Actiwatch 2, Philips Respironics) combined with a sleep-wake diary. They will undergo one night of polysomnography (PSG), followed by comprehensive assessment of cognitive function. Additionally, participants will undergo amyloid PET-CT (Positron Emission Tomography- Computed Tomography) to measure brain amyloid accumulation and MRI to investigate atrophy and vascular changes.

**Analysis:** All analyses will be performed using IBM SPSS version 20.0 (SPSS Inc, Chicago, USA). We will perform independent samples t-tests to compare all outcome parameters.

**Ethics and dissemination:** The study protocol was approved by our institutional ethical review board (NL55712.091.16, file number 2016-2337) and will be performed according to good clinical practice (GCP) rules. Data and results will be published in in 2019 and 2020.

**Key words:** Alzheimer's disease, amyloid accumulation, neurodegeneration, cognitive function, sleep, sleep deprivation, shift work

**ARTICLE SUMMARY**

## Strengths and limitations of the study

- the unique cohort of maritime pilots allows the prospective assessment of long-term externally caused sleep disturbances and their potential consequences for cognitive functioning and amyloid accumulation
- the unique cohort might also be a limitation to the study, because they might not be comparable to the control group to some extent
- in addition to imaging techniques (PET-CT and MRI), we use sensitive and well-validated neuropsychological tests to measure different domains of cognitive function (reaction time, visual memory, executive function, semantic memory and episodic memory)
- we will make use of four different instruments to get a comprehensive measure of sleeping patterns (two subjective and two objective ones)
- our results could give rise to new treatment opportunities, that aim at sleep improvement and management in order to prevent or reduce amyloid accumulation and in turn delay or even prevent the development of AD

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Alzheimer's disease (AD) is the most prevalent cause of dementia and currently affects approximately 36 million people worldwide (1). Thus far, no successful treatment is available. One of the major contributors to the neurodegeneration seen in the brains of AD patients is amyloid-beta ( $A\beta$ ) (2). The amyloid-cascade hypothesis characterizes amyloid accumulation as the fundamental initiating pathway for the development of AD (3). While memory impairment and disorientation are hallmarks of the disease, approximately 44% of people living with AD also suffer from some form of sleep disturbance (4). AD patients have more awakenings during the night, present decreased slow wave sleep (SWS), less rapid eye movement (REM) sleep and more frequent daytime napping compared to age-matched controls without dementia (4). Neurodegeneration in the sleep-wake regulating areas of the brain has been identified as a potential cause of the frequent sleep disturbances among AD patients (5).

Recent evidence suggests that sleep and AD have a bi-directional relationship, in which sleep disturbances are not just a symptom of AD, but also contribute to AD pathophysiology (6). Elderly people suffering from insomnia are more likely to develop AD compared to controls without insomnia (7). Furthermore, disrupted circadian rhythm among otherwise healthy individuals (8) and sleep-disordered breathing disorders (9) increase the chance of developing AD later in life. Poor sleep quality specifically has been shown to increase the risk of AD among older individuals (5, 10-13). A recent meta-analysis of epidemiological studies found that poor sleep increased AD risk with a relative risk (RR) of 1.7 and that approximately 15% of cases of AD in the population might be attributable to sleep problems (14).

The effect of acute sleep deprivation on AD has been shown in both rodent and human studies, that investigated the effect of sleep and sleep deprivation on  $A\beta$  levels. Rodents and humans show fluctuations in  $A\beta$  levels over a 24-hour rhythm, where levels rise during wakefulness and decrease during sleep (15, 16). Following acute sleep deprivation, the drop in  $A\beta$  levels that would normally occur after sufficient sleep the following morning, was absent. Based on this evidence, chronic sleep disturbances might lead to a pronounced accumulation of  $A\beta$  in the brain, which in turn increases the risk to develop AD.

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3 To date, observational and epidemiological studies have identified a relationship between poor sleep  
4 and the risk of developing AD. Experimental research has found that sleep deprivation and A $\beta$  levels  
5 are related in both animals and humans. However, the direct effect of chronic sleep deprivation and its  
6 consequences on cognitive functioning, particularly the risk to develop AD later in life, has not been  
7 studied before.  
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12 In this article we describe the methodology and the participant cohort of the SCHIP (Sleep-Cognition  
13 Hypothesis In maritime Pilots) study. We designed the SCHIP study in order to investigate the effect  
14 of chronic sleep deprivation on cognitive function, structural brain changes, and amyloid accumulation  
15 by using a unique cohort of healthy subjects with long-term sleep disruption due to their occupation as  
16 maritime pilots. Because of the bi-directional nature of the relationship between sleep and AD, poor  
17 sleep and sleep disorders could represent an early symptom that precedes the clinical manifestation of  
18 AD. Therefore, it is especially important to investigate the effect of chronic sleep deprivation in a  
19 group that experiences disrupted sleep, which is caused by an external factor (work) and not by an  
20 intrinsic sleeping disorder (such as insomnia) which could be AD-related. Therefore participants in  
21 this study were selected based on their chronic sleep disruptions caused by objectifiable external  
22 occupational factors.  
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34 Results and insights born from the SCHIP study could shed more light on sleep disturbance as one of  
35 the risk factors to develop AD and contribute to new and improved treatment strategies. In the SCHIP  
36 study we will investigate whether participants with chronic sleep disturbances perform worse on  
37 cognitive assessment in comparison to a healthy control group and whether chronic sleep disturbances  
38 are associated with elevated brain amyloid concentrations and structural brain changes.  
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## 46 **2. METHODS AND ANALYSIS**

### 47 **2.1. Participants**

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50 Considering that this study is a proof of principle study, it is not possible to establish the exact effect  
51 size of the change in cognitive function we expect to see between the maritime pilots and the healthy  
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3 controls.

4 To account for possible 10% withdrawal, we chose to have n=20 participants in each arm.

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6 In order to reach enough power to detect clinically relevant differences regarding the results of the  
7 PET-CT scan, we performed a sample size power calculation using G Power (version 3.1.9.3) (17).

8  
9 Reported normal values (mean and standard deviation) for this age group in the literature vary between  
10 studies but are in the order of a mean standard uptake value (SUV) between 0.9 and 1.1 with standard  
11 deviations (SDs) in the range of 0.05 – 0.2. We define a relevant difference between maritime pilots  
12 and normal values to be 0.2 or more (an SUV of 1.3 or higher is considered as abnormal in most  
13 studies). This results in a large expected effect size (>0.8). The precise number of age- and education  
14 matched subjects in the database is not known yet but is estimated to be at least 50 (between 50 and  
15 100). We have applied a one-tailed test (it is not possible to have a SUV lower than normal values).  
16 With an alpha of 0.05, with n=20 our power is 0.95 or higher (depending on the number of normal  
17 subjects). The lower level for power (0.85) is reached with 13-15 pilots.

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19 Based on these calculations, we will aim to recruit 20 pilots, allowing for drop-out of 5-7 pilots (either  
20 due to withdrawal of consent or artefacts in the PET-CT).

21  
22 Participants will be recruited within the national organization of Dutch Maritime Pilots (Nederlandse  
23 Loodswezen). We selected the maritime pilots as a suitable study population because of their unique  
24 irregular working schedule. In a usual workweek they have a maximum of two hours of rest in  
25 between episodes of two hours (or more) of work, for a period of 24 hours. This rhythm continues, in  
26 most cases, for four or five consecutive days a week, followed by a week off. The week off is often  
27 characterized by limited sleep as well, because the maritime pilots use that week to catch up with  
28 social engagements (friends, family, etc.).

29  
30 The responsibility of a maritime pilot is to handle large international ships arriving by sea and to  
31 maneuver them into their final docking position in one of the Dutch harbors. This profession carries  
32 high responsibilities and requires accurate knowledge of the dimensions of the harbor and the ships  
33 besides technical knowledge and navigational skills. The 2-by-2-hour schedule is necessary because  
34 guiding the ships is a time intensive procedure, that can take hours to complete. Maintaining this work  
35 schedule for more than 15 years will result in prolonged exposure to sleep deprivation.



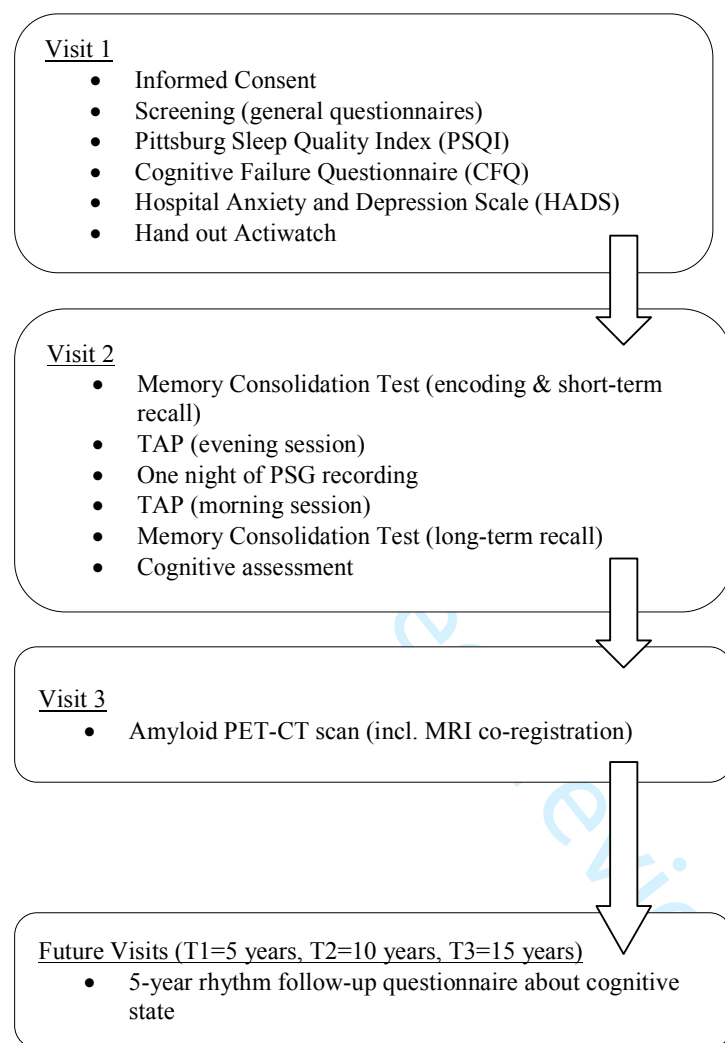
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3 We will reach out to the whole maritime pilot community, in order to recruit pilots who are  
4 approximately 50 years old, with at least 15 years of uninterrupted work history as a maritime pilot.  
5 Additional inclusion criteria are not using neuro-active medications or psycho-stimulants,  
6 consumption of <14 alcoholic beverages per week, a body mass index of 18-30kg/m<sup>2</sup> and no  
7 subjective cognitive complaints (Cognitive Failure Questionnaire (CFQ <43). As control group, we  
8 will recruit 20 age, sex and education matched healthy adults with normal sleep indicated by a score of  
9 >5 on a subjective sleep questionnaire (Pittsburgh Sleep Quality Index, PSQI). The study protocol was  
10 approved by our institutional review board (NL55712.091.16, file number 2016-2337) and will be  
11 performed according to good clinical practice (GCP) rules.  
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## 22 **2.2. Experimental Design**

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24 The aim of the SCHIP study is to investigate the relationship between chronic sleep disturbances due  
25 to an extrinsic cause (work related), cognitive function and amyloid accumulation among healthy  
26 middle-aged men to test the hypothesis that prolonged abnormal sleep behavior increases the risk of  
27 AD-related cognitive decline. In order to test this hypothesis, maritime pilots will have three visits  
28 and controls will have two visits (figure 1). During the first visit participants will complete general  
29 questionnaires about medical history, sleeping habits and cognitive state. Approximately 10 days after  
30 the first visit has taken place, participants are invited to the sleep center Kempenhaeghe (Heeze, The  
31 Netherlands) for the second visit. They will arrive at the sleep center at 19.00 h and complete a  
32 memory consolidation test (modified 'Doors Test') and a test for attentional performance (TAP 2.3)  
33 (18), followed by overnight polysomnography (PSG). Participants wake up at their normal wake time  
34 and complete a neuropsychological assessment after breakfast around 9.00h.  
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46 Visit three (only for the maritime pilots) will be performed at the Radboud university medical center in  
47 Nijmegen (The Netherlands), where participants will undergo a standard amyloid PET-CT to measure  
48 brain amyloid accumulation and a 3T-MRI for coregistration. Participants are scheduled in their week  
49 off in order to prevent short term effects of sleep disruption on amyloid concentrations in the brain  
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Figure 1: Overview experimental design



### 2.3. Sleep Measurements

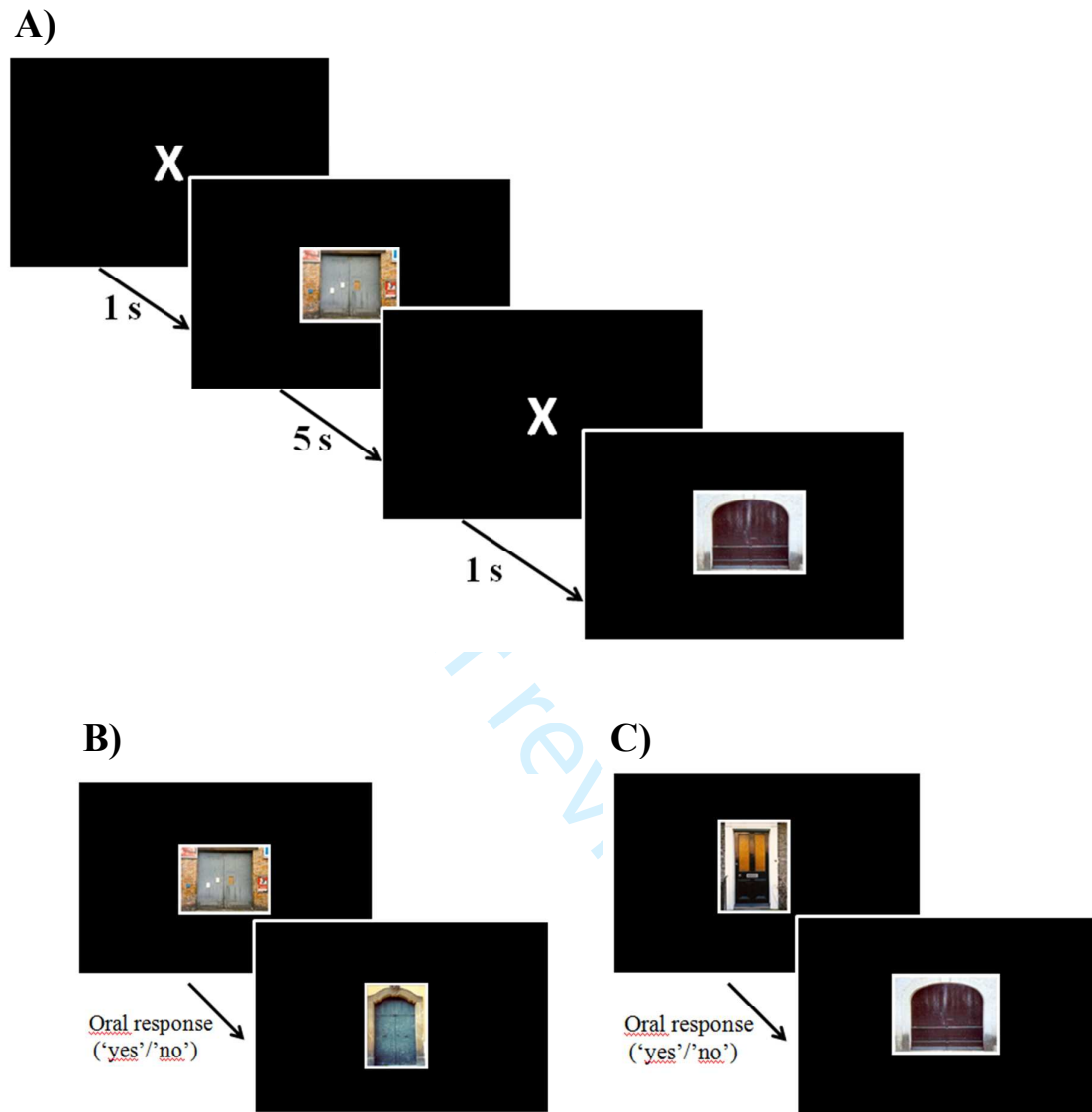
In order to obtain a comprehensive measure of sleeping patterns, we will use the Pittsburg Sleep Quality Index (PSQI) with questions about average sleeping behavior, including the report of bedtime, get-up time, sleep latency, total sleep time, sleep disturbances (pain, breathing etc.) and use of sleep medication. The maritime pilots will be instructed to fill in the questionnaire twice, once with regard to a work week and once with regard to a week off. Additionally all participants are asked to maintain a sleep-wake diary on a daily basis. In this diary they have to keep track of their bed times, the time it took to fall asleep (sleep latency), the number of awakenings and their get up times. Furthermore they will receive an accelerometer, the Actiwatch 2 (Philips Respironics; Eindhoven, The Netherlands), in

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3 order to obtain more objective measurements of sleeping behavior. The Actiwatch is worn around the  
4 wrist and measures sleep and wakefulness automatically based on movement. Participants are  
5 instructed to fill in the sleep diary and to wear the Actiwatch for 10 days preceding the second visit.  
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#### 10 **2.4. Cognitive assessment**

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12 The neuropsychological assessment has been designed to measure the following cognitive domains,  
13 using validated Dutch versions of widely used neuropsychological tests. Episodic memory is assessed  
14 using the WMS-IV Logical Memory and the Rey-Auditory Verbal Learning Test (RAVLT). Working  
15 memory and executive function are measured by WAIS-IV Digit Span, Trail Making Test (TMT-A,  
16 TMT-B) and WAIS-IV Digit Symbol test. Semantic memory and language are assessed by letter  
17 fluency (D-A-T), semantic fluency (animal/profession naming) and the Boston Naming Test-Short  
18 Form (BNT) (20). Attentional performance is studied using the alertness test of the Test of Attentional  
19 Performance (TAP 2.3) (18). This test is conducted twice, once in the evening around 19.00 h and  
20 once in the morning around 9.00 h. In order to test overnight memory consolidation, a novel paradigm  
21 was developed based on the Doors Test, a visual recognition task developed by Baddely and  
22 colleagues (21) and extended using a validated database of 2000 pictures of doors (22). During the  
23 encoding trial, we present 120 pictures of doors that participants are instructed to remember. All  
24 targets (doors) are presented twice in a different, pseudo-randomized order. Targets are shown for 5  
25 seconds each, separated by a fixation cross presented for 1 second. Approximately 10 minutes after the  
26 encoding trial, participants are presented with 30 of the original doors and 15 distracters (new pictures  
27 of doors, not presented before) that are randomly mixed. During this short-term recognition test, the  
28 task is to indicate whether the door had been presented before (oral response with 'yes') or not (oral  
29 response 'no'). For the long-term delayed recall, the same procedure is applied in the morning, using  
30 the other 90 original pictures, plus 45 new distracters. Calculating the hits and false alarms, we  
31 compute the sensitivity ( $A'$ ) for short-term and for long-term delayed recall ( $A' = 0.5 + ((\text{hit-rate} -$   
32  $\text{false alarm rate}) \times (1 + \text{hit rate} - \text{false alarm rate})) / (4 \times \text{hit rate} \times (1 - \text{false alarm rate}))$ ).  
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Figure 2: Memory Consolidation Task Design



A) Example of Encoding trials – 120 doors separated by fixation cross, B) Example of short-term recognition trials (after approx. 10 min) – oral response (pressing spacebar to move to next stimulus), 30 targets and 15 distracters, C) Example of long-term recognition trials (after one night) - oral response (pressing spacebar to move to next stimulus), 90 targets and 45 distracters

### 2.5. Amyloid PET-CT scan with co-registered magnetic resonance imaging (MRI)

Brain amyloid PET-CT scan will be performed to measure amyloid load. Participants will be scanned at the Radboudumc department of Radiology and Nuclear medicine on a PET scanner (Biograph mCT, Siemens, Erlangen, Germany). Subjects will receive an intravenous bolus of the well-validated PET tracer  $^{18}\text{F}$ -flutemetamol, and static brain images will be acquired from 90-110 min post-injection

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3 (frames of 5 mins), as recommended (see SPC;  
4 [http://www.ema.europa.eu/docs/en\\_GB/document\\_library/EPAR\\_-](http://www.ema.europa.eu/docs/en_GB/document_library/EPAR_-_Product_Information/human/002557/WC500172950.pdf)  
5 [\\_Product\\_Information/human/002557/WC500172950.pdf](http://www.ema.europa.eu/docs/en_GB/document_library/EPAR_-_Product_Information/human/002557/WC500172950.pdf)). The individual reconstructed PET images  
6  
7 will be co-registered with individual structural T<sub>1</sub> MRI scans.  
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10 The PET scans will be rated visually as positive or negative for the presence of amyloid depositions  
11 typical of AD, as earlier described (23). For quantitative purposes, grey matter volumes of interest will  
12 be defined on the individual MRIs (e.g. frontal brain areas, the precuneus, and hippocampus) as well  
13 as for cerebella grey matter (to assess non-specific uptake). The amyloid burden will be quantified  
14 using the standardized uptake value ratio, since it has been validated that this analysis method has  
15 comparable agreement with full kinetic modeling (24). Brain MRI will be performed on a 3 Tesla  
16 system (Magnetom Trio, Siemens, Erlangen, Germany). The structural T<sub>1</sub>-weighted images will be  
17 used for co-registration purposes, and to define grey matter in the volumes of interest. In addition,  
18 these scans will be used to perform volumetric measurements (e.g. of the hippocampus). Also, arterial  
19 spin labeling (ASL) will be performed to measure global and regional cerebral blood flow (CBF),  
20 since reduced regional CBF is an early marker of AD.  
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## 34 **2.6. Future follow-up visits**

35 Because of the insufficient knowledge about the correlation between amyloid accumulation in the  
36 brain and the actual development of Alzheimer's disease, we decided to follow the maritime pilots in a  
37 5 year cycle in order to monitor any cognitive changes. We will contact them 3 times in total, which  
38 leaves us with a maximum follow-up period of 15 years. At each time point, they will be asked to  
39 answer 3 questions online:  
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- 45 1) Did you develop cognitive complaints over the last 5 years?
- 46 2) Were you diagnosed with mild cognitive impairment during the last 5 years? If yes, when and what  
47 was the precise diagnosis?
- 48 3) Were you diagnosed with dementia in the past 5 years? If yes, when and what was the precise  
49 diagnosis?
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55 If the answer is 'Yes' to one of these questions, we will reach out to the participants for clarification.  
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## 2.7. Statistical analysis

All analyses will be performed using IBM SPSS version 20.0 (SPSS Inc, Chicago, USA). Statistical significance is set at  $p < 0.05$ , with Bonferroni correction for multiple comparisons when appropriate, combined with reports of effect size and 95% confidence intervals. All continuous variables will be assessed for normal distribution by inspection of histograms and the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test. Levene's test will be used to assess equality of variances. We will perform an independent samples t-test to compare all outcome parameters. The primary outcome for cognitive function will be the score on each test respectively adjusted for age and education. Regarding imaging, the primary outcome measure will be the visual read of the amyloid PET scans (positive or negative PET). Secondary outcome measurements will be quantitative PET (SUV ratios), brain volume (MRI), and CBF measurements (MRI-ASL).

## 3. ETHICS AND DISSEMINATION

The study protocol was approved by our institutional review board, CMO (Commissie Mensgebonden Onderzoek) (NL55712.091.16, file number 2016-2337) and performed according to good clinical practice (GCP) rules. Written informed consent will be obtained from all participants. We are planning to publish the data and results of the SCHIP study in two or three articles in 2019 and 2020.

## 4. DISCUSSION

In this article we presented the design and methodology of the SCHIP study. The main aim of the SCHIP study is to investigate the effect of chronic sleep deprivation on cognition and amyloid accumulation in a group of maritime pilots. Since previous studies assessed sleep disruption for only one or a few days, the SCHIP study extends these studies by investigating the effect of long term sleep disturbances on cognitive function and amyloid accumulation. We expect that the maritime pilots have had long-term (>10 years) exposure to fragmented sleep due to their work schedules and that this long-term poor sleep has led to reduction in SWS. Every slow wave observed on an electroencephalography (EEG) is a pause in synaptic activity (25). Synaptic activity and A $\beta$  levels appear

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3 strongly related, as A $\beta$  levels increase due to synaptic activity (26). More synaptic activity is observed  
4 during wakefulness, especially in the default mode network (DMN) or other highly interconnected  
5 brain areas (26). During sleep, synaptic activity is reduced, which could result in a decrease in A $\beta$   
6 levels in the brain (26). Therefore, poor sleep (especially poor SWS) over the course of many years  
7 could increase A $\beta$  concentrations, which in turn could trigger AD-associated neurodegeneration and  
8 loss of cognitive function.  
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11 To test this hypothesis, we will perform extensive cognitive testing, using tests that are sensitive to  
12 subtle decline in episodic memory, which is affected early in AD. Additionally, amyloid positivity will  
13 be measured using amyloid PET-CT scans in order to explore the effect of long-term poor sleep on  
14 amyloid concentration in the brain. Cerebral blood flow and cerebrovascular resistance will be  
15 investigated, as reductions in blood flow and increases in resistance occur early in the Alzheimer  
16 disease process (27). Finally, global grey matter volume and hippocampal volume will be measured.  
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18 The unique cohort of maritime pilots will allow the prospective assessment of long-term sleep  
19 disturbances and its consequences for cognitive functioning and amyloid accumulation. The design of  
20 the SCHIP study presents a number of strengths. No other previous investigation has looked into the  
21 effect of chronic sleep disturbances on cognition in healthy men to this extent. Since sleep disorders  
22 might also be early symptoms of preclinical AD, it is especially important in this age group to  
23 investigate the effect of chronic sleep disruption due to an external factor and not due to intrinsic sleep  
24 disorders. Furthermore, we measure different domains of cognitive function (reaction time, visual  
25 memory, executive function, semantic memory and episodic memory) using sensitive and well-  
26 validated neuropsychological tasks. In addition to testing cognitive functions, we will perform brain  
27 imaging to detect amyloid accumulation as potential consequence of chronic sleep deprivation. We  
28 will make use of four different instruments to get a comprehensive measure of sleeping patterns, two  
29 subjective and two objective ones. The subjective measurements consist of the PSQI and the  
30 maintenance of the sleep-wake diary. The objective assessments include the data from the Actiwatch 2  
31 (Philips Respironics) in addition to a night of PSG. The data from the Actiwatch can be compared to  
32 the sleep-wake diary entries. These data can then be used to verify the sleeping behavior of  
33 participants, making sure they maintain regularity and consistency in their sleeping habits.  
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3 Results of the SCHIP study will give us more insights into the consequences of long term disrupted  
4 sleep on cognitive function and amyloid accumulation in an AD related context. Our results could give  
5 rise to new treatment opportunities, that aim at sleep improvement and management in order to  
6 prevent or reduce amyloid accumulation and in turn delay or even prevent the development of AD.  
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For peer review only



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3 *Figure 1: Overview experimental design*  
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6 *Figure 2: Memory Consolidation Task Design*  
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8 A) Example of Encoding trials – 120 doors separated by fixation cross, B) Example of short-term recognition trials (after  
9 approx. 10 min) – oral response (pressing spacebar to move to next stimulus), 30 targets and 15 distracters, C) Example of  
10 long-term recognition trials (after one night) - oral response (pressing spacebar to move to next stimulus), 90 targets and 45  
11 distracters  
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## 6. AUTHORS' CONTRIBUTION

Jana Thomas was involved in setting up the study, recruiting participants, gathering baseline characteristics, analyzing of first data and writing most of the sections in this manuscript.

Sharon Ooms helped with setting up the study, recruitment and design of the project and writing the manuscript.

Marcel Verbeek contributed to the design of the study.

Jan Booij and Mark Rijpkema were major contributors in choosing and designing the right PET-CT/MRI procedure and wrote part of the manuscript.

Roy Kessels contributed to selecting the right neuropsychological tests, helped with the statistical analyzes of the first data and contributed to the revision of this manuscript.

Sebastiaan Overeem was a major contributor in setting up a collaboration with the sleeping center Kempenhaeghe (Heeze, The Netherlands) and helped revising the manuscript.

Jurgen Claassen was a major contributor in obtaining funding, setting up the study, designing the project and was extensively involved in writing and revising the manuscript.

All authors read and approved the final manuscript.

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## 8. COMPETING INTEREST STATEMENT

The authors declare that they have no competing interest.

Figure 1: Overview experimental design

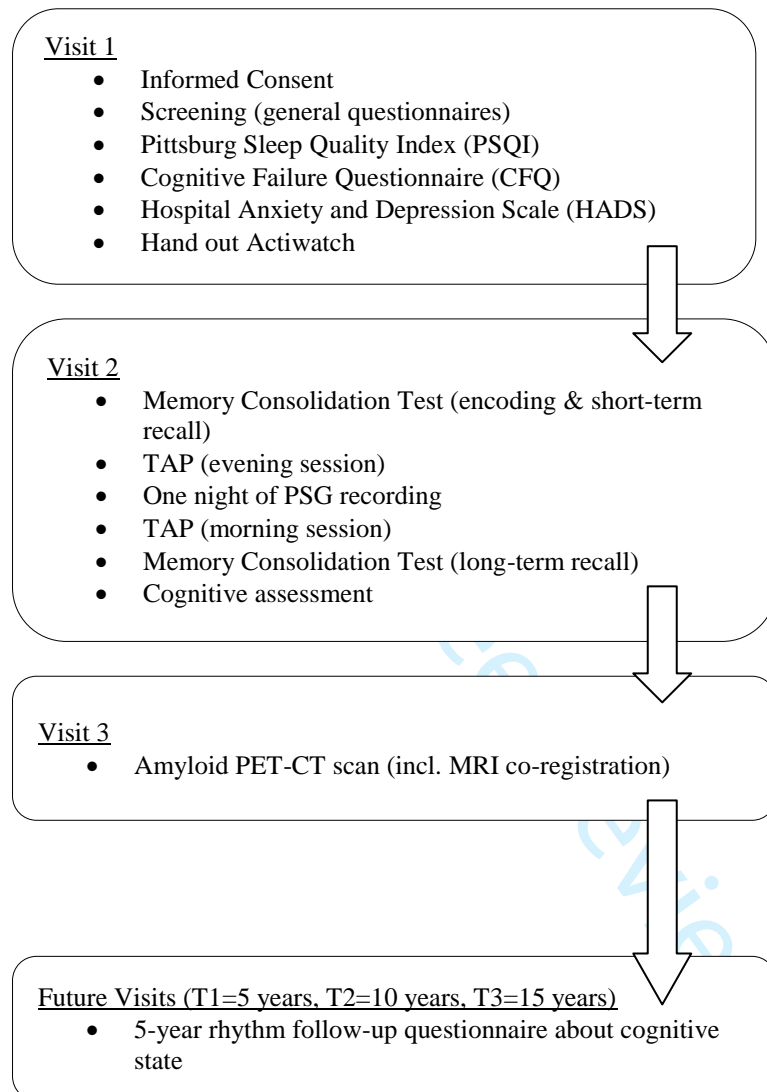
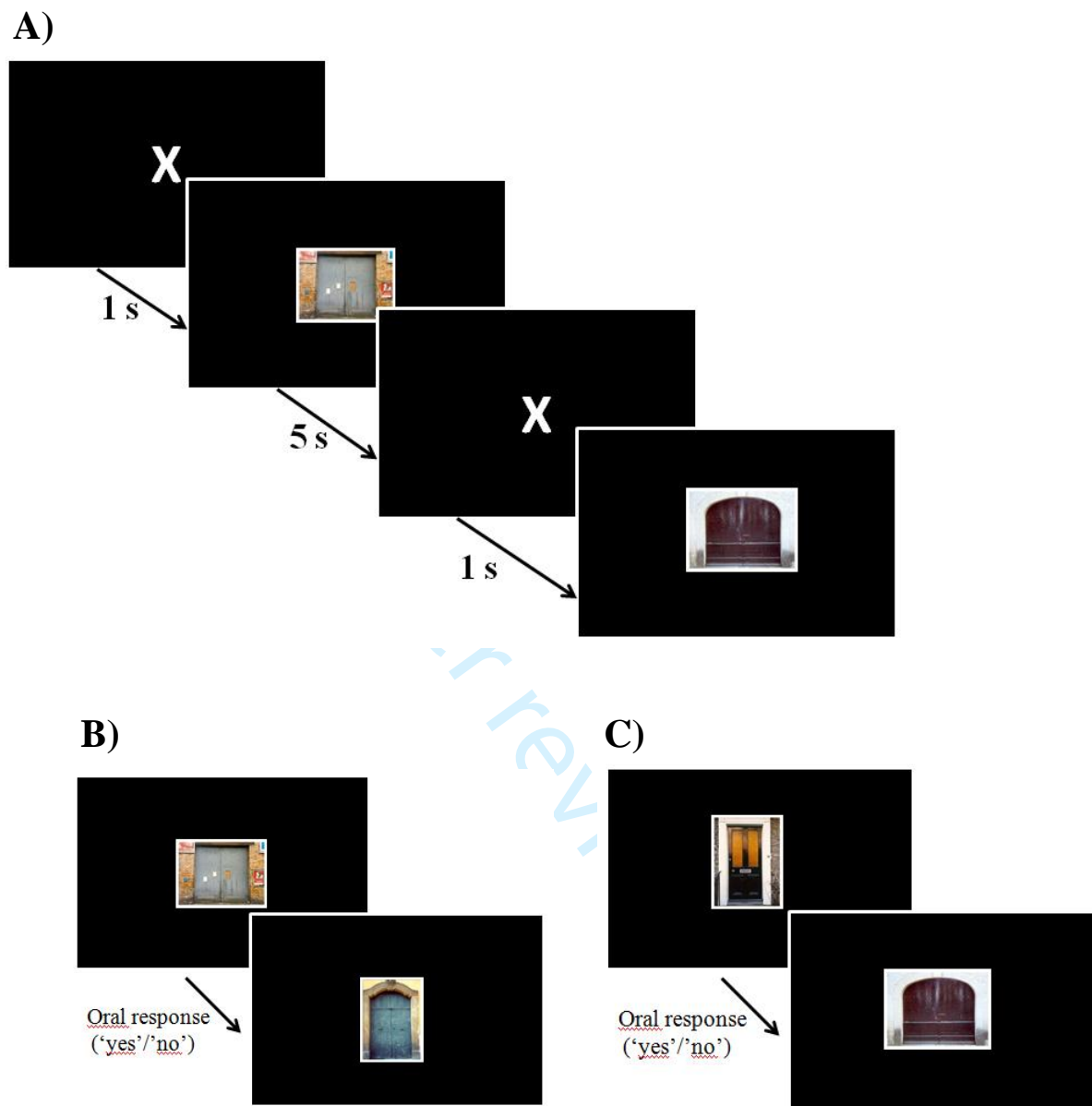


Figure 2: Memory Consolidation Task Design



A) Example of Encoding trials – 120 doors separated by fixation cross, B) Example of short-term recognition trials (after approx. 10 min) – oral response (pressing spacebar to move to next stimulus), 30 targets and 15 distracters, C) Example of long-term recognition trials (after one night) - oral response (pressing spacebar to move to next stimulus), 90 targets and 45 distracters

# BMJ Open

## Sleep-Cognition-Hypothesis In maritime Pilots - What is the effect of long-term work-related poor sleep on cognition and amyloid accumulation in healthy middle-aged maritime pilots: Methodology of a case-control study

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<b>Primary Subject Heading</b>:	Geriatric medicine
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Keywords:	Alzheimer's disease, Amyloid accumulation, Neurodegeneration, Cognitive function, Sleep

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3 Sleep-Cognition-Hypothesis In maritime Pilots – What is the effect of long-term work-related poor  
4 sleep on cognition and amyloid accumulation in healthy middle-aged maritime pilots: Methodology of  
5 a case-control study  
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## ABSTRACT

**Introduction:** Evidence indicates a bi-directional relationship between poor sleep and Alzheimer's disease (AD). While AD may lead to disruption of normal sleep, poor sleep in itself may play a causal role in the development of AD by influencing the production and/or clearance of the amyloid-beta ( $A\beta$ ) protein. This led to the hypothesis that extended periods (>10 years) of partial sleep deprivation could lead to  $A\beta$  accumulation with subsequent cognitive AD related decline. This manuscript describes the methodology of the SCHIP study, a cohort study in maritime pilots that aims at investigating the relationship between chronic partial sleep deprivation due to an extrinsic cause (work related), cognitive function and amyloid accumulation among healthy middle-aged maritime pilots, to test the hypothesis that prolonged partial sleep deprivation increases the risk of AD-related cognitive decline.

**Methods:** Our study sample consists of a group of healthy middle-aged maritime pilots ( $n=20$ ), who have had irregular sleeping patterns for more than 15 years due to irregular work schedules. This chronic partial sleep deprivation group will be compared to a group of healthy, age and education matched controls ( $n=20$ ) with normal sleep. Participants will complete 10 days of actigraphy (Actiwatch 2, Philips Respironics) combined with a sleep-wake diary. They will undergo one night of polysomnography (PSG), followed by comprehensive assessment of cognitive function. Additionally, participants will undergo amyloid PET-CT (Positron Emission Tomography- Computed Tomography) to measure brain amyloid accumulation and MRI to investigate atrophy and vascular changes.

**Analysis:** All analyses will be performed using IBM SPSS version 20.0 (SPSS Inc, Chicago, USA). We will perform independent samples t-tests to compare all outcome parameters.

**Ethics and dissemination:** The study protocol was approved by our institutional ethical review board (NL55712.091.16, file number 2016-2337) and will be performed according to good clinical practice (GCP) rules. Data and results will be published in 2020.

**Key words:** Alzheimer's disease, amyloid accumulation, neurodegeneration, cognitive function, sleep, sleep deprivation, shift work

## ARTICLE SUMMARY

### Strengths and limitations of the study

- the unique cohort of maritime pilots allows the prospective assessment of long-term externally caused partial sleep deprivation and their potential consequences for cognitive functioning and amyloid accumulation
- the unique cohort might also be a limitation to the study, because they might not be comparable to the control group to some extent (e.g. IQ, work environment, personality)
- in addition to imaging techniques (PET-CT and MRI), we use sensitive and well-validated neuropsychological tests to measure different domains of cognitive function (reaction time, visual memory, executive function, semantic memory and episodic memory)
- we will make use of four different instruments to get a comprehensive measure of sleeping patterns (two subjective and two objective ones)
- our results could give rise to new treatment opportunities, that aim at sleep improvement and management in order to prevent or reduce amyloid accumulation and in turn delay or even prevent the development of AD

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Alzheimer's disease (AD) is the most prevalent cause of dementia and currently affects approximately 36 million people worldwide (1). Thus far, no successful treatment is available. One of the major contributors to the neurodegeneration seen in the brains of AD patients is amyloid-beta ( $A\beta$ ) (2). The amyloid-cascade hypothesis characterizes amyloid accumulation as the fundamental initiating pathway for the development of AD (3). The reason why amyloid accumulates however is not clear yet. Recent evidence suggests that poor sleep might be one of the risk factors for amyloid accumulation and thereby increases the risk of AD development (4). Elderly people suffering from insomnia are more likely to develop AD compared to controls without insomnia (4). Furthermore, disrupted circadian rhythm among otherwise healthy individuals (5) and sleep-disordered breathing disorders (6) increase the chance of developing AD later in life. Poor sleep quality specifically has been shown to increase the risk of AD among older individuals (7-11). A recent meta-analysis of epidemiological studies found that poor sleep increased AD risk and that approximately 15% of cases of AD in the population might be attributable to sleep problems (12).

The effect of acute sleep deprivation on AD has been shown in both rodent and human studies, that investigated the effect of sleep and sleep deprivation on  $A\beta$  levels. Rodents and humans show fluctuations in  $A\beta$  levels over a 24-hour rhythm, where levels rise during wakefulness and decrease during sleep (13, 14). Following acute sleep deprivation, the drop in  $A\beta$  levels that would normally occur after sufficient sleep the following morning, was absent. Based on this evidence, chronic sleep disturbances might lead to a pronounced accumulation of  $A\beta$  in the brain, which in turn increases the risk to develop AD.

To date, observational and epidemiological studies have identified a relationship between poor sleep and the risk of developing AD. Experimental research has found that sleep deprivation and  $A\beta$  levels are related in both animals and humans. However, the direct effect of chronic partial sleep deprivation and its consequences on cognitive functioning, particularly the risk to develop AD later in life, has not been studied before.

In this article we describe the methodology and the participant cohort of the SCHIP (Sleep-Cognition Hypothesis In maritime Pilots) study. We designed the SCHIP study in order to investigate the effect

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3 of chronic partial sleep deprivation on cognitive function, structural brain changes, and amyloid  
4 accumulation by using a unique cohort of healthy subjects with long-term partial sleep deprivation due  
5 to their occupation as maritime pilots. Because of the bi-directional nature of the relationship between  
6 sleep and AD, in which poor sleep is a symptom of the disease that precedes the clinical manifestation  
7 of AD, but might also be a risk factor that potentially contributes to the development of the disease, it  
8 is especially important to investigate the effect of chronic sleep deprivation in a group that experiences  
9 disrupted sleep, which is caused by an external factor (work) and not by an intrinsic sleeping disorder  
10 (such as insomnia) which could be AD-related. Therefore participants in this study were selected  
11 based on their chronic partial sleep deprivation caused by objectifiable external occupational factors  
12 Results and insights born from the SCHIP study could shed more light on sleep disturbance as one of  
13 the risk factors to develop AD and contribute to new and improved treatment strategies. In the SCHIP  
14 study we will investigate whether participants with chronic partial sleep deprivation perform worse on  
15 cognitive assessment in comparison to a healthy control group and whether chronic partial sleep  
16 deprivation is associated with elevated brain amyloid concentrations and structural brain changes.  
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## 35 **2. METHODS AND ANALYSIS**

### 36 **2.1. Participants**

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38 Considering that this study is a proof of principle study, it is not possible to establish the exact effect  
39 size of the change in cognitive function we expect to see between the maritime pilots and the healthy  
40 controls.  
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46 To account for possible 10% withdrawal, we chose to have  $n=20$  participants in each arm.

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48 In order to reach enough power to detect clinically relevant differences regarding the results of the  
49 PET-CT scan, we performed a sample size power calculation using G Power (version 3.1.9.3) (15).  
50 Reported normal values (mean and standard deviation) for this age group in the literature vary between  
51 studies but are in the order of a mean standard uptake value (SUV) between 0.9 and 1.1 with standard  
52 deviations (SDs) in the range of 0.05 – 0.2. We define a relevant difference between maritime pilots  
53 and normal values to be 0.2 or more (an SUV of 1.3 or higher is considered as abnormal in most  
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3 studies). This results in a large expected effect size ( $>0.8$ ). The precise number of age- and education  
4 matched subjects in the database is not known yet but is estimated to be at least 50 (between 50 and  
5 100). We have applied a one-tailed test (it is not possible to have a SUV lower than normal values).  
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9 With an alpha of 0.05, with  $n=20$  our power is 0.95 or higher (depending on the number of normal  
10 subjects). The lower level for power (0.85) is reached with 13-15 pilots.

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13 Based on these calculations, we will aim to recruit 20 pilots, allowing for drop-out of 5-7 pilots (either  
14 due to withdrawal of consent or artefacts in the PET-CT).

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17 Participants will be recruited within the national organization of Dutch Maritime Pilots (Nederlandse  
18 Loodswezen). We selected the maritime pilots as a suitable study population because of their unique  
19 irregular working schedule. They are called to work depending on the number and kind of ships that  
20 arrive. In a typical 7-day work week they have to be available 24 hours per day during which they can  
21 be called several times. This results in multiple divided short sleep periods over 24 hours during a  
22 work week, this is followed by a week off.

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25 The responsibility of a maritime pilot is to handle large international ships arriving by sea and to  
26 maneuver them into their final docking position in one of the Dutch harbors. This profession carries  
27 high responsibilities and requires accurate knowledge of the dimensions of the harbor and the ships  
28 besides technical knowledge and navigational skills. This results in irregular working schedules  
29 because guiding the ships is a time intensive procedure, that can take hours to complete. Maintaining  
30 this schedule for more than 15 years will result in prolonged exposure to sleep deprivation.

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33 We will reach out to the whole maritime pilot community, in order to recruit pilots who are  
34 approximately 50 to 60 years old, with at least 15 years of uninterrupted work history as a maritime  
35 pilot.

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38 Additional inclusion criteria are not using neuro-active medications or psycho-stimulants,  
39 consumption of  $<14$  alcoholic beverages per week, a body mass index of 18-30kg/m<sup>2</sup> and no  
40 subjective cognitive complaints (Cognitive Failure Questionnaire (CFQ  $<43$ ). As control group, we  
41 will recruit 20 age, sex and education matched healthy adults with normal sleep indicated by a score of  
42  $>5$  on a subjective sleep questionnaire (Pittsburgh Sleep Quality Index, PSQI). The study protocol was  
43 approved by our institutional review board (NL55712.091.16, file number 2016-2337) and will be  
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3 performed according to good clinical practice (GCP) rules. Inclusion of participants started in August  
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5 2018 and we expect to complete the analysis of all data in August 2020.  
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## 9 **2.2. Experimental Design**

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11 The aim of the SCHIP study is to investigate the relationship between chronic partial sleep deprivation  
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13 due to an extrinsic cause (work related), cognitive function and amyloid accumulation among healthy  
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15 middle-aged men to test the hypothesis that prolonged partial sleep deprivation increases the risk of  
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17 AD-related cognitive decline. In order to test this hypothesis, maritime pilots will have three visits  
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19 and controls will have two visits (figure 1). During the first visit participants will complete general  
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21 questionnaires about medical history, sleeping habits and cognitive state. Approximately 10 days after  
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23 the first visit has taken place, participants are invited to the sleep center Kempenhaeghe (Heeze, The  
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25 Netherlands) for the second visit. They will arrive at the sleep center at 19.00 h and complete a  
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27 memory consolidation test (modified 'Doors Test') and a test for attentional performance (TAP 2.3)  
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29 (16), followed by overnight polysomnography (PSG). Participants wake up at their normal wake time  
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31 and complete a neuropsychological assessment after breakfast around 9.00h.  
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35 Visit three (only for the maritime pilots) will be performed at the Radboud university medical center in  
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37 Nijmegen (The Netherlands), where participants will undergo a standard amyloid PET-CT to measure  
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39 brain amyloid accumulation and a 3T-MRI for coregistration. Participants are scheduled in their week  
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41 off in order to prevent short term effects of sleep disruption on amyloid concentrations in the brain  
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43 (17). They are instructed not eat or drink anything except from water 3 hours prior to the scan.  
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46 *Figure 1: Overview experimental design*  
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## 48 **2.3 Patient and Public Involvement**

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50 No patients were involved in this study because this study involves healthy participants.

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52 However, the participants' organization contacted us due to recent evidence from the literature on the  
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54 relationship between sleep and AD. They expressed their worries about their health and their own risk  
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56 of developing AD considering their irregular sleep. They reported feeling very tired at the end of a  
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3 work week and speculated that within their group of maritime pilots (including already retired pilots),  
4 cases of dementia occurred more frequently than expected.  
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7 Participants were also tightly involved in the design, realization and feasibility of the study. For  
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9 example, they were involved in choosing the technique to measure amyloid and expressed the  
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11 preference for a PET-CT scan over cerebrospinal fluid (CSF) measurements of amyloid.  
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#### 13 Dissemination of results to participants:

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15 Results from the PSG measurements will be reported only to participants if we find abnormalities such  
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17 as apnea or sleeping disorders. This will be done by one of our sleep clinicians via telephone. Results  
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19 from the PET-CT scan will be disclosed via telephone by one of our clinicians as well. This is  
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21 according to the protocol that has been approved by the local ethical committee. Any incidental  
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23 findings on the PET-CT and/or MRI will be disseminated as well.  
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#### 28 **2.4. Sleep Measurements**

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30 In order to obtain a comprehensive measure of sleeping patterns, we will use the Pittsburg Sleep  
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32 Quality Index (PSQI) with questions about average sleeping behavior, including the report of bedtime,  
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34 get-up time, sleep latency, total sleep time, sleep disturbances (pain, breathing etc.) and use of sleep  
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36 medication. The maritime pilots will be instructed to fill in the questionnaire twice, once with regard  
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38 to a work week and once with regard to a week off. Additionally all participants are asked to maintain  
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40 a sleep-wake diary on a daily basis. In this diary they have to keep track of their bed times, the time it  
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42 took to fall asleep (sleep latency), the number of awakenings and their get up times. Furthermore they  
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44 will receive an accelerometer, the Actiwatch 2 (Philips Respironics; Eindhoven, The Netherlands), in  
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46 order to obtain more objective measurements of sleeping behavior. The Actiwatch is worn around the  
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48 wrist and measures total sleep time and number of awakenings during sleep automatically based on  
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50 movement. Participants are instructed to fill in the sleep diary and to wear the Actiwatch for 10 days  
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52 preceding the second visit.  
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## 2.5. Cognitive assessment

The neuropsychological assessment has been designed to measure the following cognitive domains, using validated Dutch versions of widely used neuropsychological tests. Episodic memory is assessed using the WMS-IV Logical Memory and the Rey-Auditory Verbal Learning Test (RAVLT). Working memory and executive function are measured by WAIS-IV Digit Span, Trail Making Test (TMT-A, TMT-B) and WAIS-IV Digit Symbol test. Semantic memory and language are assessed by letter fluency (D-A-T), semantic fluency (animal/profession naming) and the Boston Naming Test-Short Form (BNT) (18). Attentional performance is studied using the alertness test of the Test of Attentional Performance (TAP 2.3) (16). This test is conducted twice, once in the evening around 19.00 h and once in the morning around 9.00 h. In order to test overnight memory consolidation, a novel paradigm was developed based on the Doors Test, a visual recognition task developed by Baddely and colleagues (19) and extended using a validated database of 2000 pictures of doors (20). During the encoding trial, we present 120 pictures of doors that participants are instructed to remember. All targets (doors) are presented twice in a different, pseudo-randomized order. Targets are shown for 5 seconds each, separated by a fixation cross presented for 1 second (figure 2). Approximately 10 minutes after the encoding trial, participants are presented with 30 of the original doors and 15 distracters (new pictures of doors, not presented before) that are randomly mixed. During this short-term recognition test, the task is to indicate whether the door had been presented before (oral response with 'yes') or not (oral response 'no'). For the long-term delayed recall, the same procedure is applied in the morning, using the other 90 original pictures, plus 45 new distracters (figure 2). Calculating the hits and false alarms, we compute the sensitivity ( $A'$ ) for short-term and for long-term delayed recall ( $A' = 0.5 + ((\text{hit-rate} - \text{false alarm rate}) \times (1 + \text{hit rate} - \text{false alarm rate})) / (4 \times \text{hit rate} \times (1 - \text{false alarm rate}))$ ).

### *Figure 2: Memory Consolidation Task Design*

A) Example of Encoding trials – 120 doors separated by fixation cross, B) Example of short-term recognition trials (after approx. 10 min) – oral response (pressing spacebar to move to next stimulus), 30 targets and 15 distracters, C) Example of long-term recognition trials (after one night) - oral response (pressing spacebar to move to next stimulus), 90 targets and 45 distracters



## 2.6. Amyloid PET-CT scan with co-registered magnetic resonance imaging (MRI)

Brain amyloid PET-CT scan will be performed to measure amyloid load. Participants will be scanned at the Radboudumc department of Radiology and Nuclear medicine on a PET scanner (Biograph mCT, Siemens, Erlangen, Germany). Subjects will receive an intravenous bolus of the well-validated PET tracer  $^{18}\text{F}$ -flutemetamol, and static brain images will be acquired from 90-110 min post-injection (frames of 5 mins), as recommended (see SPC; [http://www.ema.europa.eu/docs/en\\_GB/document\\_library/EPAR\\_-\\_Product\\_Information/human/002557/WC500172950.pdf](http://www.ema.europa.eu/docs/en_GB/document_library/EPAR_-_Product_Information/human/002557/WC500172950.pdf)). The individual reconstructed PET images will be co-registered with individual structural  $T_1$  MRI scans.

The PET scans will be rated visually as positive or negative by an experienced nuclear medicine physician for the presence of amyloid depositions typical of AD. Scores will be expressed as a global SUV, which will be compared against population normative values, as earlier described (21). For quantitative purposes, grey matter volumes of interest will be defined on the individual MRIs (e.g. frontal brain areas, the precuneus, and hippocampus) as well as for cerebella grey matter (to assess non-specific uptake). The amyloid burden will be quantified using the standardized uptake value ratio, since it has been validated that this analysis method has comparable agreement with full kinetic modeling (22). Brain MRI will be performed on a 3 Tesla system (Magnetom Trio, Siemens, Erlangen, Germany). The structural  $T_1$ -weighted images will be used for co-registration purposes, and to define grey matter in the volumes of interest. In addition, these scans will be used to perform volumetric measurements (e.g. of the hippocampus). Also, arterial spin labeling (ASL) will be performed to measure global and regional cerebral blood flow (CBF), since reduced regional CBF is an early marker of AD. Individual anatomic MRI scans will be co-registered with the individual PET scans using the image processing platform FSL ([fsl.fmrib.ox.ac.uk](http://fsl.fmrib.ox.ac.uk)) to calculate standard uptake value ratios. The PET-CT data will be expressed in Centiloid units to evaluate our data with historical control data as was recently validated by Battle and co-workers (23).

## 2.7. Future follow-up visits

Because of the insufficient knowledge about the correlation between amyloid accumulation in the brain and the actual development of Alzheimer's disease, we decided to follow the maritime pilots in a 5 year cycle in order to monitor any cognitive changes. We will contact them 3 times in total, which leaves us with a maximum follow-up period of 15 years. At each time point, they will be asked to answer 3 questions online:

- 1) Did you develop cognitive complaints over the last 5 years? This question will be further elaborated on with the Cognitive Failure Questionnaire (CFQ). The CFQ is a validated questionnaire that aims at detecting daily disruptions of cognitive functions. Participants are confronted with 25 statements and have to indicate how often they experience the situation that is described in the statements with a score between 0 (never) and 4 (very often).
- 2) Were you diagnosed with mild cognitive impairment during the last 5 years? If yes, when and what was the precise diagnosis?
- 3) Were you diagnosed with dementia in the past 5 years? If yes, when and what was the precise diagnosis?

If the answer is 'Yes' to one of these questions, we will reach out to the participants for clarification.

## 2.8. Statistical analysis

All analyses will be performed using IBM SPSS version 20.0 (SPSS Inc, Chicago, USA). Statistical significance is set at  $p < 0.05$ , with Bonferroni correction for multiple comparisons when appropriate, combined with reports of effect size and 95% confidence intervals. All continuous variables will be assessed for normal distribution by inspection of histograms and the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test.

Levene's test will be used to assess equality of variances. We will perform an independent samples t-test to compare all outcome parameters. The primary outcome for cognitive function will be the score on each test respectively adjusted for age and education. Regarding imaging, the primary outcome measure will be the visual read of the amyloid PET scans (positive or negative PET). Secondary outcome measurements will be quantitative PET (SUV ratios), brain volume (MRI), and CBF measurements (MRI-ASL).

### 3. ETHICS AND DISSEMINATION

The study protocol was approved by our institutional review board, CMO (Commissie Mensgebonden Onderzoek) (NL55712.091.16, file number 2016-2337) and performed according to good clinical practice (GCP) rules. Written informed consent will be obtained from all participants. We are planning to publish the data and results of the SCHIP study in two or three articles in 2019 and 2020.

### 4. DISCUSSION

In this article we presented the design and methodology of the SCHIP study. The main aim of the SCHIP study is to investigate the effect of chronic partial sleep deprivation on cognition and amyloid accumulation in a group of maritime pilots. Since previous studies assessed sleep deprivation for only one or a few days, the SCHIP study extends these studies by investigating the effect of long term partial sleep deprivation on cognitive function and amyloid accumulation. We expect that the maritime pilots have had long-term (>10 years) exposure to fragmented sleep due to their work schedules and that this long-term partial sleep deprivation has led to reduction in SWS. Every slow wave observed on an electro-encephalography (EEG) is a pause in synaptic activity (24). Synaptic activity and A $\beta$  levels appear strongly related, as A $\beta$  levels increase due to synaptic activity (25). More synaptic activity is observed during wakefulness, especially in the default mode network (DMN) or other highly interconnected brain areas (25). During sleep, synaptic activity is reduced, which could result in a decrease in A $\beta$  levels in the brain (25). Therefore, partial sleep deprivation (especially poor SWS) over the course of many years could increase A $\beta$  concentrations, which in turn could trigger AD-associated neurodegeneration and loss of cognitive function.

To test this hypothesis, we will perform extensive cognitive testing, using tests that are sensitive to subtle decline in episodic memory, which is affected early in AD. Additionally, amyloid positivity will be measured using amyloid PET-CT scans in order to explore the effect of long-term partial sleep deprivation on amyloid concentration in the brain. Cerebral blood flow and cerebrovascular resistance will be investigated, as reductions in blood flow and increases in resistance occur early in the

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3 Alzheimer disease process (26). Finally, global grey matter volume and hippocampal volume will be  
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5 measured.

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7 The unique cohort of maritime pilots will allow the prospective assessment of long-term partial sleep  
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9 deprivation and its consequences for cognitive functioning and amyloid accumulation. The design of  
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11 the SCHIP study presents a number of strengths. No other previous investigation has looked into the  
12  
13 effect of chronic partial sleep deprivation on cognition in healthy men to this extent. Since sleep  
14  
15 disorders might also be early symptoms of preclinical AD, it is especially important in this age group  
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17 to investigate the effect of chronic sleep disruption due to an external factor and not due to intrinsic  
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19 sleep disorders. All enrolled maritime pilots did not have any sleeping disorders and did not use sleep  
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21 medication as confirmed by a general health questionnaire which was filled in upon screening for  
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23 participation. Furthermore, we measure different domains of cognitive function (reaction time, visual  
24  
25 memory, executive function, semantic memory and episodic memory) using sensitive and well-  
26  
27 validated neuropsychological tasks. In addition to testing cognitive functions, we will perform brain  
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29 imaging to detect amyloid accumulation as potential consequence of chronic sleep deprivation. We  
30  
31 will make use of four different instruments to get a comprehensive measure of sleeping patterns, two  
32  
33 subjective and two objective ones. The subjective measurements consist of the PSQI and the  
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35 maintenance of the sleep-wake diary. The objective assessments include the data from the Actiwatch 2  
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37 (Philips Respironics) in addition to a night of PSG. The data from the Actiwatch can be compared to  
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39 the sleep-wake diary entries. These data can then be used to verify the sleeping behavior of  
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41 participants, making sure they maintain regularity and consistency in their sleeping habits.

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44 Results of the SCHIP study will give us more insights into the consequences of long term disrupted  
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46 sleep on cognitive function and amyloid accumulation in an AD related context. Our results could give  
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48 rise to new treatment opportunities, that aim at sleep improvement and management in order to  
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50 prevent or reduce amyloid accumulation and in turn delay or even prevent the development of AD.  
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## 6. AUTHORS' CONTRIBUTION

Jana Thomas was involved in setting up the study, recruiting participants, gathering baseline characteristics, analyzing of first data and writing most of the sections in this manuscript.

Sharon Ooms helped with setting up the study, recruitment and design of the project and writing the manuscript.

Marcel Verbeek contributed to the design of the study.

Jan Booij and Mark Rijpkema were major contributors in choosing and designing the right PET-CT/MRI procedure and wrote part of the manuscript.

Roy Kessels contributed to selecting the right neuropsychological tests, helped with the statistical analyzes of the first data and contributed to the revision of this manuscript.

Sebastiaan Overeem was a major contributor in setting up a collaboration with the sleeping center Kempenhaeghe (Heeze, The Netherlands) and helped revising the manuscript.

Jurgen Claassen was a major contributor in obtaining funding, setting up the study, designing the project and was extensively involved in writing and revising the manuscript.

All authors read and approved the final manuscript.

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## 8. COMPETING INTEREST STATEMENT

The authors declare that they have no competing interest.

Figure 1: Overview experimental design

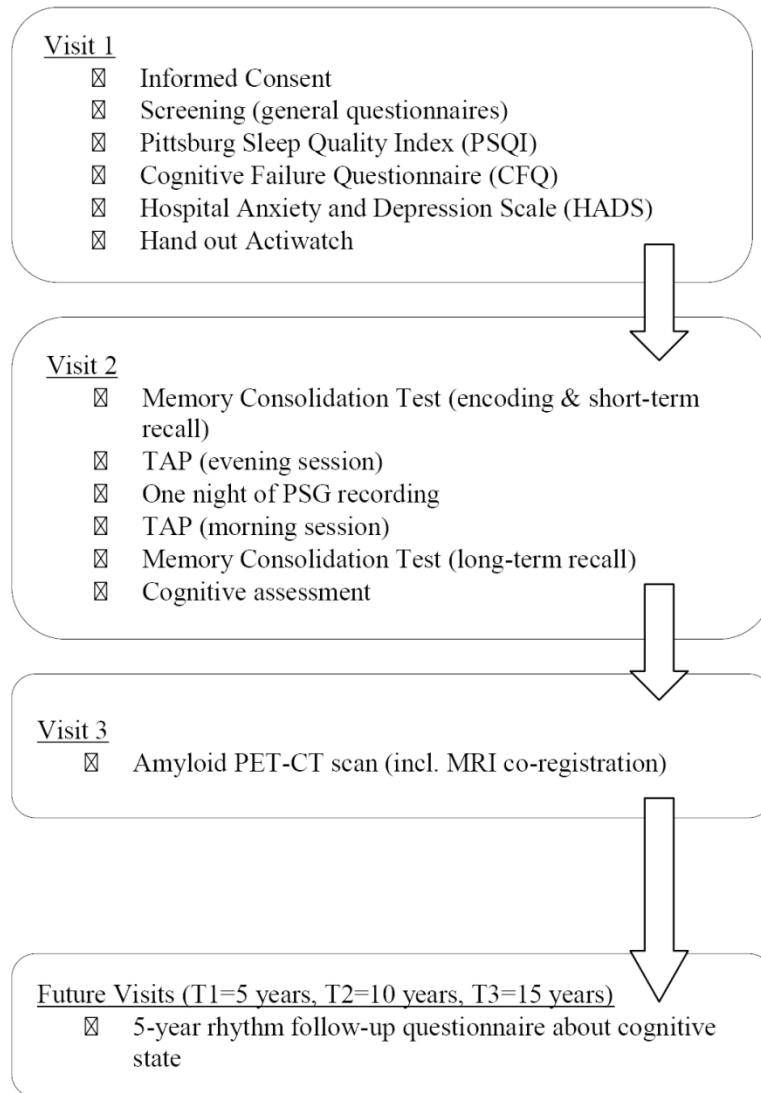
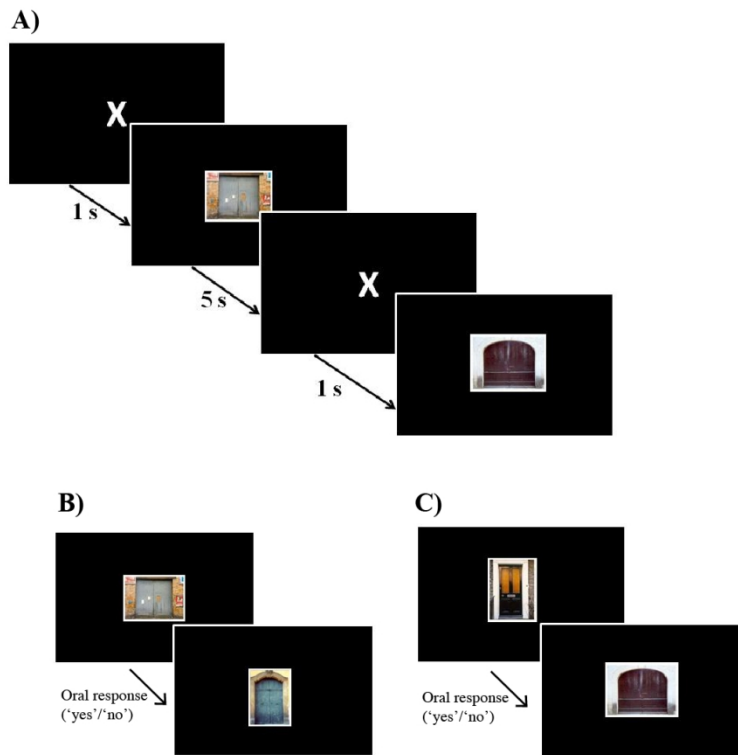


Figure 1: Overview experimental design

90x140mm (300 x 300 DPI)



Figure 2: Memory Consolidation Task Design



A) Example of Encoding trials – 120 doors separated by fixation cross, B) Example of short-term recognition trials (after approx. 10 min) – oral response (pressing spacebar to move to next stimulus), 30 targets and 15 distracters, C) Example of long-term recognition trials (after one night) - oral response (pressing spacebar to move to next stimulus), 90 targets and 45 distracters

Figure 2: Memory Consolidation Task Design

A) Example of Encoding trials – 120 doors separated by fixation cross, B) Example of short-term recognition trials (after approx. 10 min) – oral response (pressing spacebar to move to next stimulus), 30 targets and 15 distracters, C) Example of long-term recognition trials (after one night) - oral response (pressing spacebar to move to next stimulus), 90 targets and 45 distracters

120x119mm (300 x 300 DPI)

# BMJ Open

## Sleep-Cognition-Hypothesis In maritime Pilots - What is the effect of long-term work-related poor sleep on cognition and amyloid accumulation in healthy middle-aged maritime pilots: Methodology of a case-control study

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<b>Primary Subject Heading</b>:	Geriatric medicine
Secondary Subject Heading:	Neurology, Radiology and imaging, Public health
Keywords:	Alzheimer's disease, Amyloid accumulation, Neurodegeneration, Cognitive function, Sleep

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3 Sleep-Cognition-Hypothesis In maritime Pilots – What is the effect of long-term work-related poor  
4 sleep on cognition and amyloid accumulation in healthy middle-aged maritime pilots: Methodology of  
5 a case-control study  
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## ABSTRACT

**Introduction:** Evidence indicates a bi-directional relationship between poor sleep and Alzheimer's disease (AD). While AD may lead to disruption of normal sleep, poor sleep in itself may play a causal role in the development of AD by influencing the production and/or clearance of the amyloid-beta ( $A\beta$ ) protein. This led to the hypothesis that extended periods (>10 years) of sleep loss could lead to  $A\beta$  accumulation with subsequent cognitive AD related decline. This manuscript describes the methodology of the SCHIP study, a cohort study in maritime pilots that aims at investigating the relationship between prolonged work-related sleep loss, cognitive function and amyloid accumulation among healthy middle-aged maritime pilots, to test the hypothesis that prolonged sleep loss deprivation increases the risk of AD-related cognitive decline.

**Methods:** Our study sample consists of a group of healthy middle-aged maritime pilots (n=20), who have been exposed to highly irregular work schedules for more than 15 years. The maritime pilots will be compared to a group of healthy, age and education matched controls (n=20) with normal sleep. Participants will complete 10 days of actigraphy (Actiwatch 2, Philips Respironics) combined with a sleep-wake diary. They will undergo one night of polysomnography (PSG), followed by comprehensive assessment of cognitive function. Additionally, participants will undergo amyloid PET-CT (Positron Emission Tomography- Computed Tomography) to measure brain amyloid accumulation and MRI to investigate atrophy and vascular changes.

**Analysis:** All analyses will be performed using IBM SPSS version 20.0 (SPSS Inc, Chicago, USA). We will perform independent samples t-tests to compare all outcome parameters.

**Ethics and dissemination:** The study protocol was approved by our institutional ethical review board (NL55712.091.16, file number 2016-2337) and will be performed according to good clinical practice (GCP) rules. Data and results will be published in 2020.

**Key words:** Alzheimer's disease, amyloid accumulation, neurodegeneration, cognitive function, sleep, sleep deprivation, shift work

## ARTICLE SUMMARY

### Strengths and limitations of the study

- the unique cohort of maritime pilots allows the prospective assessment of the effect of chronic exposure to irregular maritime work schedules on cognitive functioning and amyloid accumulation; the unique cohort might also be a limitation to the study, because they might not be comparable to the control group to some extent (e.g. IQ, work environment, personality)
- since we include participants up to 60 years old we will have to take possible aging effects on sleep in to account while interpreting our results
- in addition to imaging techniques (PET-CT and MRI), we use sensitive and well-validated neuropsychological tests to measure different domains of cognitive function (reaction time, visual memory, executive function, semantic memory and episodic memory)
- we will make use of four different instruments to obtain a comprehensive measure of sleeping patterns (two subjective and two objective ones)
- our results could give rise to new treatment opportunities, that aim at sleep improvement and management in order to prevent or reduce amyloid accumulation and in turn delay or even prevent the development of AD

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Alzheimer's disease (AD) is the most prevalent cause of dementia and currently affects approximately 36 million people worldwide (1). Thus far, no successful treatment is available. One of the major contributors to the neurodegeneration seen in the brains of AD patients is amyloid-beta ( $A\beta$ ) (2). The amyloid-cascade hypothesis characterizes amyloid accumulation as the fundamental initiating pathway for the development of AD (3). The reason why amyloid accumulates however is not clear yet. Recent evidence suggests that poor sleep might be one of the risk factors for amyloid accumulation and thereby increases the risk of AD development (4). Elderly people suffering from insomnia are more likely to develop AD compared to controls without insomnia (4). Furthermore, disrupted circadian rhythm among otherwise healthy individuals (5) and sleep-disordered breathing disorders (6) increase the chance of developing AD later in life. Poor sleep quality specifically has been shown to increase the risk of AD among older individuals (7-11). A recent meta-analysis of epidemiological studies found that poor sleep increased AD risk and that approximately 15% of cases of AD in the population might be attributable to sleep problems (12).

The effect of acute sleep deprivation on AD has been shown in both rodent and human studies, that investigated the effect of sleep and sleep deprivation on  $A\beta$  levels. Rodents and humans show fluctuations in  $A\beta$  levels over a 24-hour rhythm, where levels rise during wakefulness and decrease during sleep (13, 14). Following acute sleep deprivation, the drop in  $A\beta$  levels that would normally occur after sufficient sleep the following morning, was absent. Based on this evidence, chronic sleep disturbances might lead to a pronounced accumulation of  $A\beta$  in the brain, which in turn increases the risk to develop AD.

To date, observational and epidemiological studies have identified a relationship between poor sleep and the risk of developing AD. Experimental research has found that sleep deprivation and  $A\beta$  levels are related in both animals and humans. However, the direct effect of chronic partial sleep deprivation and its consequences on cognitive functioning, particularly the risk to develop AD later in life, has not been studied before.

In this article we describe the methodology and the participant cohort of the SCHIP (Sleep-Cognition Hypothesis In maritime Pilots) study. We designed the SCHIP study in order to investigate the effect

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3 of long term work-related sleep loss on cognitive function, structural brain changes, and amyloid  
4 accumulation by using a unique cohort of healthy subjects with highly irregular shift work as maritime  
5 pilots. Because of the bi-directional nature of the relationship between sleep and AD, in which poor  
6 sleep is a symptom of the disease that precedes the clinical manifestation of AD, but might also be a  
7 risk factor that potentially contributes to the development of the disease, it is especially important to  
8 investigate the effects of sleep loss, caused by an external factor (work) and not by an intrinsic  
9 sleeping disorder (such as insomnia) that could be AD-related. Therefore participants in this study  
10 were selected based on their prolonged exposure to irregular maritime work-schedules. In this  
11 maritime pilot group, sleep loss is characterized as a combination of sleep deprivation, sleep restriction  
12 and sleep fragmentation or disruption. We will refer to these using the umbrella term 'sleep loss'  
13 throughout. An example of an individual working schedule from maritime pilot is shown in figure 1.  
14 Results and insights born from the SCHIP study could shed more light on sleep disturbance as one of  
15 the risk factors to develop AD and contribute to new and improved treatment strategies. In the SCHIP  
16 study we will investigate whether maritime pilots perform worse on cognitive assessment in  
17 comparison to a healthy control group and whether they have evidence of elevated brain amyloid  
18 concentrations and structural brain changes.

## 2. METHODS AND ANALYSIS

### 2.1. Participants

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42 Considering that this study is a proof of principle study, it is not possible to establish the exact effect  
43 size of the change in cognitive function we expect to see between the maritime pilots and the healthy  
44 controls.

45 To account for possible 10% withdrawal, we chose to have  $n=20$  participants in each arm.

46 In order to reach enough power to detect clinically relevant differences regarding the results of the  
47 PET-CT scan, we performed a sample size power calculation using G Power (version 3.1.9.3) (15).

48 Reported normal values (mean and standard deviation) for this age group in the literature vary between  
49 studies but are in the order of a mean standard uptake value (SUV) between 0.9 and 1.1 with standard  
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3 deviations (SDs) in the range of 0.05 – 0.2. We define a relevant difference between maritime pilots  
4 and normal values to be 0.2 or more (an SUV of 1.3 or higher is considered as abnormal in most  
5 studies). This results in a large expected effect size (>0.8). The precise number of age- and education  
6 matched subjects in the database is not known yet but is estimated to be at least 50 (between 50 and  
7 100). We have applied a one-tailed test (it is not possible to have a SUV lower than normal values).  
8  
9 With an alpha of 0.05, with n=20 our power is 0.95 or higher (depending on the number of normal  
10 subjects). The lower level for power (0.85) is reached with 13-15 pilots.  
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14 Based on these calculations, we will aim to recruit 20 pilots, allowing for drop-out of 5-7 pilots (either  
15 due to withdrawal of consent or artefacts in the PET-CT).  
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18  
19 Participants will be recruited within the national organization of Dutch Maritime Pilots (Nederlandse  
20 Loodswezen). We selected the maritime pilots as a suitable study population because of their unique  
21 irregular working schedule. They are called to work depending on the number and kind of ships that  
22 arrive. In a typical 7-day work week they have to be available 24 hours per day during which they can  
23 be called several times. This results in multiple divided short sleep periods over 24 hours during a  
24 work week, this is followed by a week off. An example of a workday of a maritime pilot is illustrated  
25 in figure 1.  
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37 *Figure 1: Example maritime pilot working schedule. Working hours indicated in red.*  
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41 The responsibility of a maritime pilot is to handle large international ships arriving by sea and to  
42 maneuver them into their final docking position in one of the Dutch harbors. This profession carries  
43 high responsibilities and requires accurate knowledge of the dimensions of the harbor and the ships  
44 besides technical knowledge and navigational skills. This results in irregular working schedules  
45 because guiding the ships is a time intensive procedure, that can take hours to complete. Maintaining  
46 this schedule for more than 15 years will result in chronic exposure to sleep loss, either due to partial  
47 sleep deprivation (missing a full night of sleep due to work), sleep restriction (a much shorter night of  
48 sleep than normal) or sleep fragmentation or disruption (short periods of sleep interrupted by calls to  
49 work).  
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3 We will reach out to the whole maritime pilot community, in order to recruit pilots who are  
4 approximately 50 to 60 years old, with at least 15 years of uninterrupted work history as a maritime  
5 pilot.  
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9 Additional inclusion criteria are not using neuro-active medications or psycho-stimulants,  
10 consumption of <14 alcoholic beverages per week, a body mass index of 18-30kg/m<sup>2</sup> and no  
11 subjective cognitive complaints (Cognitive Failure Questionnaire (CFQ <43). As control group, we  
12 will recruit 20 age, sex and education matched healthy adults with normal sleep indicated by a score of  
13 >5 on a subjective sleep questionnaire (Pittsburgh Sleep Quality Index, PSQI). The study protocol was  
14 approved by our institutional review board (NL55712.091.16, file number 2016-2337) and will be  
15 performed according to good clinical practice (GCP) rules. Inclusion of participants started in August  
16 2018 and we expect to complete the analysis of all data in August 2020.  
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## 28 **2.2. Experimental Design**

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30 The aim of the SCHIP study is to investigate the relationship between long-term work exposure to  
31 irregular working schedules, cognitive function and amyloid accumulation among healthy middle-  
32 aged men to test the hypothesis that work-related prolonged sleep loss increases the risk of AD-related  
33 cognitive decline. In order to test this hypothesis, maritime pilots will have three visits and controls  
34 will have two visits (figure 2). During the first visit participants will complete general questionnaires  
35 about medical history, sleeping habits and cognitive state. Approximately 10 days after the first visit  
36 has taken place, participants are invited to the sleep center Kempenhaeghe (Heeze, The Netherlands)  
37 for the second visit. They will arrive at the sleep center at 19.00 h and complete a memory  
38 consolidation test (modified 'Doors Test') and a test for attentional performance (TAP 2.3) (16),  
39 followed by overnight polysomnography (PSG). Participants wake up at their normal wake time and  
40 complete a neuropsychological assessment after breakfast around 9.00h.  
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52 Visit three (only for the maritime pilots) will be performed at the Radboud university medical center in  
53 Nijmegen (The Netherlands), where participants will undergo a standard amyloid PET-CT to measure  
54 brain amyloid accumulation and a 3T-MRI for coregistration. Participants are scheduled in their week  
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3 off in order to prevent short term effects of sleep disruption on amyloid concentrations in the brain  
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5 (17). They are instructed not eat or drink anything except from water 3 hours prior to the scan.  
6

7 *Figure 2: Overview experimental design*  
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### 10 **2.3 Patient and Public Involvement**

11 No patients were involved in this study because this study involves healthy participants.

12  
13 However, the participants' organization contacted us due to recent evidence from the literature on the  
14  
15 relationship between sleep and AD. They expressed their worries about their health and their own risk  
16  
17 of developing AD considering their irregular sleep. They reported feeling very tired at the end of a  
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19 work week and speculated that within their group of maritime pilots (including already retired pilots),  
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21 cases of dementia occurred more frequently than expected.  
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24  
25 Participants were also tightly involved in the design, realization and feasibility of the study. For  
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27 example, they were involved in choosing the technique to measure amyloid and expressed the  
28  
29 preference for a PET-CT scan over cerebrospinal fluid (CSF) measurements of amyloid.  
30

#### 31 Dissemination of results to participants:

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33 Results from the PSG measurements will be reported only to participants if we find abnormalities such  
34  
35 as apnea or sleeping disorders. This will be done by one of our sleep clinicians via telephone. Results  
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37 from the PET-CT scan will be disclosed via telephone by one of our clinicians as well. This is  
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39 according to the protocol that has been approved by the local ethical committee. Any incidental  
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41 findings on the PET-CT and/or MRI will be disseminated as well.  
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### 46 **2.4. Sleep Measurements**

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48 In order to obtain a comprehensive measure of sleeping patterns, we will use the Pittsburgh Sleep  
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50 Quality Index (PSQI) with questions about average sleeping behavior, including the report of bedtime,  
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52 get-up time, sleep latency, total sleep time, sleep disturbances (pain, breathing etc.) and use of sleep  
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54 medication. The maritime pilots will be instructed to fill in the questionnaire twice, once with regard  
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56 to a work week and once with regard to a week off. Additionally all participants are asked to maintain  
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58 a sleep-wake diary on a daily basis. In this diary they have to keep track of their bed times, the time it  
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3 took to fall asleep (sleep latency), the number of awakenings and their get up times. Furthermore they  
4 will receive an accelerometer, the Actiwatch 2 (Philips Respironics; Eindhoven, The Netherlands), in  
5 order to obtain more objective measurements of sleeping behavior. The Actiwatch is worn around the  
6 wrist and measures total sleep time and number of awakenings during sleep automatically based on  
7 movement. Participants are instructed to fill in the sleep diary and to wear the Actiwatch for 10 days  
8 preceding the second visit.  
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## 18 **2.5. Cognitive assessment**

19 The neuropsychological assessment has been designed to measure the following cognitive domains,  
20 using validated Dutch versions of widely used neuropsychological tests. Episodic memory is assessed  
21 using the WMS-IV Logical Memory and the Rey-Auditory Verbal Learning Test (RAVLT). Working  
22 memory and executive function are measured by WAIS-IV Digit Span, Trail Making Test (TMT-A,  
23 TMT-B) and WAIS-IV Digit Symbol test. Semantic memory and language are assessed by letter  
24 fluency (D-A-T), semantic fluency (animal/profession naming) and the Boston Naming Test-Short  
25 Form (BNT) (18). Attentional performance is studied using the alertness test of the Test of Attentional  
26 Performance (TAP 2.3) (16). This test is conducted twice, once in the evening around 19.00 h and  
27 once in the morning around 9.00 h. In order to test overnight memory consolidation, a novel paradigm  
28 was developed based on the Doors Test, a visual recognition task developed by Baddely and  
29 colleagues (19) and extended using a validated database of 2000 pictures of doors (20). During the  
30 encoding trial, we present 120 pictures of doors that participants are instructed to remember. All  
31 targets (doors) are presented twice in a different, pseudo-randomized order. Targets are shown for 5  
32 seconds each, separated by a fixation cross presented for 1 second (figure 3). Approximately 10  
33 minutes after the encoding trial, participants are presented with 30 of the original doors and 15  
34 distracters (new pictures of doors, not presented before) that are randomly mixed. During this short-  
35 term recognition test, the task is to indicate whether the door had been presented before (oral response  
36 with 'yes') or not (oral response 'no'). For the long-term delayed recall, the same procedure is applied  
37 in the morning, using the other 90 original pictures, plus 45 new distracters (figure 3). Calculating the  
38 hits and false alarms, we compute the sensitivity ( $A'$ ) for short-term and for long-term delayed recall  
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( $A' = 0.5 + ((\text{hit-rate} - \text{false alarm rate}) \times (1 + \text{hit rate} - \text{false alarm rate})) / (4 \times \text{hit rate} \times (1 - \text{false alarm rate}))$ ).

### Figure 3: Memory Consolidation Task Design

A) Example of Encoding trials – 120 doors separated by fixation cross, B) Example of short-term recognition trials (after approx. 10 min) – oral response (pressing spacebar to move to next stimulus), 30 targets and 15 distracters, C) Example of long-term recognition trials (after one night) - oral response (pressing spacebar to move to next stimulus), 90 targets and 45 distracters

## 2.6. Amyloid PET-CT scan with co-registered magnetic resonance imaging (MRI)

Brain amyloid PET-CT scan will be performed to measure amyloid load. Participants will be scanned at the Radboudumc department of Radiology and Nuclear medicine on a PET scanner (Biograph mCT, Siemens, Erlangen, Germany). Subjects will receive an intravenous bolus of the well-validated PET tracer  $^{18}\text{F}$ -flutemetamol, and static brain images will be acquired from 90-110 min post-injection (frames of 5 mins), as recommended (see SPC;

[http://www.ema.europa.eu/docs/en\\_GB/document\\_library/EPAR\\_-\\_Product\\_Information/human/002557/WC500172950.pdf](http://www.ema.europa.eu/docs/en_GB/document_library/EPAR_-_Product_Information/human/002557/WC500172950.pdf)). The individual reconstructed PET images will be co-registered with individual structural  $T_1$  MRI scans.

The PET scans will be rated visually as positive or negative by an experienced nuclear medicine physician for the presence of amyloid depositions typical of AD. Scores will be expressed as a global SUV, which will be compared against population normative values, as earlier described (21). For quantitative purposes, grey matter volumes of interest will be defined on the individual MRIs (e.g. frontal brain areas, the precuneus, and hippocampus) as well as for cerebella grey matter (to assess non-specific uptake). The amyloid burden will be quantified using the standardized uptake value ratio, since it has been validated that this analysis method has comparable agreement with full kinetic modeling (22). Brain MRI will be performed on a 3 Tesla system (Magnetom Trio, Siemens, Erlangen, Germany). The structural  $T_1$ -weighted images will be used for co-registration purposes, and to define grey matter in the volumes of interest. In addition, these scans will be used to perform volumetric measurements (e.g. of the hippocampus). Also, arterial spin labeling (ASL) will be performed to measure global and regional cerebral blood flow (CBF), since reduced regional CBF is

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3 an early marker of AD. Individual anatomic MRI scans will be co-registered with the individual PET  
4 scans using the image processing platform FSL ([fsl.fmrib.ox.ac.uk](http://fsl.fmrib.ox.ac.uk)) to calculate standard uptake value  
5 ratios. The PET-CT data will be expressed in Centiloid units to evaluate our data with historical  
6 control data as was recently validated by Battle and co-workers (23).  
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## 11 12 13 **2.7. Future follow-up visits**

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15 Because of the insufficient knowledge about the correlation between amyloid accumulation in the  
16 brain and the actual development of Alzheimer's disease, we decided to follow the maritime pilots in a  
17 5 year cycle in order to monitor any cognitive changes. We will contact them 3 times in total, which  
18 leaves us with a maximum follow-up period of 15 years. At each time point, they will be asked to  
19 answer 3 questions online:  
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26 1) Did you develop cognitive complaints over the last 5 years? This question will be further elaborated  
27 on with the Cognitive Failure Questionnaire (CFQ). The CFQ is a validated questionnaire that aims at  
28 detecting daily disruptions of cognitive functions. Participants are confronted with 25 statements and  
29 have to indicate how often they experience the situation that is described in the statements with a score  
30 between 0 (never) and 4 (very often).  
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37 2) Were you diagnosed with mild cognitive impairment during the last 5 years? If yes, when and what  
38 was the precise diagnosis?  
39

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41 3) Were you diagnosed with dementia in the past 5 years? If yes, when and what was the precise  
42 diagnosis?  
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45 If the answer is 'Yes' to one of these questions, we will reach out to the participants for clarification.  
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## 49 **2.8. Statistical analysis**

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51 All analyses will be performed using IBM SPSS version 20.0 (SPSS Inc, Chicago, USA). Statistical  
52 significance is set at  $p < 0.05$ , with Bonferroni correction for multiple comparisons when appropriate,  
53 combined with reports of effect size and 95% confidence intervals. All continuous variables will be  
54 assessed for normal distribution by inspection of histograms and the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test.  
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59 Levene's test will be used to assess equality of variances. We will perform an independent samples t-  
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3 test to compare all outcome parameters. The primary outcome for cognitive function will be the score  
4 on each test respectively adjusted for age and education. Regarding imaging, the primary outcome  
5 measure will be the visual read of the amyloid PET scans (positive or negative PET). Secondary  
6 outcome measurements will be quantitative PET (SUV ratios), brain volume (MRI), and CBF  
7 measurements (MRI-ASL).  
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### 13 14 15 **3. ETHICS AND DISSEMINATION**

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18 The study protocol was approved by our institutional review board, CMO (Commissie Mensgebonden  
19 Onderzoek) (NL55712.091.16, file number 2016-2337) and performed according to good clinical  
20 practice (GCP) rules. Written informed consent will be obtained from all participants. We are planning  
21 to publish the data and results of the SCHIP study in two or three articles in 2019 and 2020.  
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### 29 **4. DISCUSSION**

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32 In this article we presented the design and methodology of the SCHIP study. The main aim of the  
33 SCHIP study is to investigate the effect of long-term work related sleep loss on cognition and amyloid  
34 accumulation. Since previous studies assessed sleep deprivation for only one or a few days, the SCHIP  
35 study extends these studies by investigating the effect of long term sleep loss on cognitive function  
36 and amyloid accumulation. We expect that the maritime pilots have had long-term (>15 years)  
37 exposure to work related sleep loss, because of their work schedules and that this exposure has led to  
38 reduction in SWS. Every slow wave observed on an electro-encephalography (EEG) is a pause in  
39 synaptic activity (24). Synaptic activity and A $\beta$  levels appear strongly related, as A $\beta$  levels increase  
40 due to synaptic activity (25). More synaptic activity is observed during wakefulness, especially in the  
41 default mode network (DMN) or other highly interconnected brain areas (25). During sleep, synaptic  
42 activity is reduced, which could result in a decrease in A $\beta$  levels in the brain (25). Therefore, sleep  
43 loss (especially poor SWS) over the course of many years could increase A $\beta$  concentrations, which in  
44 turn could trigger AD-associated neurodegeneration and loss of cognitive function.  
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3 To test this hypothesis, we will perform extensive cognitive testing, using tests that are sensitive to  
4 subtle decline in episodic memory, which is affected early in AD. Additionally, amyloid positivity will  
5 be measured using amyloid PET-CT scans in order to explore the effect of work related sleep loss on  
6 amyloid concentration in the brain. Cerebral blood flow and cerebrovascular resistance will be  
7 investigated, as reductions in blood flow and increases in resistance occur early in the Alzheimer  
8 disease process (26). Finally, global grey matter volume and hippocampal volume will be measured.

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16 The unique cohort of maritime pilots will allow the prospective assessment of prolonged work-related  
17 sleep loss and its consequences for cognitive functioning and amyloid accumulation. The design of the  
18 SCHIP study presents a number of strengths. No other previous investigation has looked into the effect  
19 of chronic partial sleep deprivation on cognition in healthy men to this extent. Since sleep disorders  
20 might also be early symptoms of preclinical AD, it is especially important in this age group to  
21 investigate the effect of sleep loss due to an external factor and not due to intrinsic sleep disorders. All  
22 enrolled maritime pilots did not have any sleeping disorders and did not use sleep medication as  
23 confirmed by a general health questionnaire which was filled in upon screening for participation.  
24 Furthermore, we measure different domains of cognitive function (reaction time, visual memory,  
25 executive function, semantic memory and episodic memory) using sensitive and well-validated  
26 neuropsychological tasks. In addition to testing cognitive functions, we will perform brain imaging to  
27 detect amyloid accumulation as potential consequence of sleep loss. We will make use of four  
28 different instruments to get a comprehensive measure of sleeping patterns, two subjective and two  
29 objective ones. The subjective measurements consist of the PSQI and the maintenance of the sleep-  
30 wake diary. The objective assessments include the data from the Actiwatch 2 (Philips Respironics) in  
31 addition to a night of PSG. The data from the Actiwatch can be compared to the sleep-wake diary  
32 entries. These data can then be used to verify the sleeping behavior of participants, making sure they  
33 maintain regularity and consistency in their sleeping habits.

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Results of the SCHIP study will give us more insights into the consequences of long term work related  
sleep loss on cognitive function and amyloid accumulation in an AD related context. Our results could  
give rise to new treatment opportunities, that aim at sleep improvement and management in order to  
prevent or reduce amyloid accumulation and in turn delay or even prevent the development of AD.

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For peer review only

## 6. AUTHORS' CONTRIBUTION

Jana Thomas was involved in setting up the study, recruiting participants, gathering baseline characteristics, analyzing of first data and writing this manuscript.

Sharon Ooms helped with setting up the study, recruitment and design of the project and writing the first draft of the manuscript.

Marcel Verbeek contributed to the design of the study.

Jan Booij and Mark Rijpkema were major contributors in choosing and designing the right PET-CT/MRI procedure and wrote part of the manuscript.

Roy Kessels contributed to selecting the right neuropsychological tests, helped with the statistical analyzes of the first data and contributed to the revision of this manuscript.

Sebastiaan Overeem was a major contributor in setting up a collaboration with the sleeping center Kempenhaeghe (Heeze, The Netherlands) and helped revising the manuscript.

Jurgen Claassen was a major contributor in obtaining funding, setting up the study, designing the project and was extensively involved in writing and revising the manuscript.

All authors read and approved the final manuscript.

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## 8. COMPETING INTEREST STATEMENT

The authors declare that they have no competing interest.

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Figure 1: Example maritime Pilot working schedule. Working hours indicated in red.

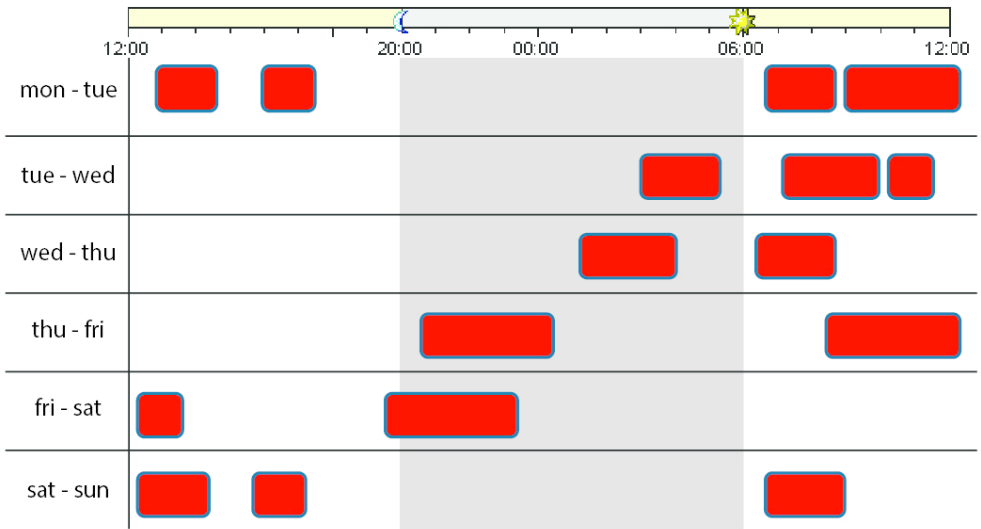


Figure 1: Example maritime pilot working schedule. Working hours indicated in red.

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Figure 2: Overview experimental design

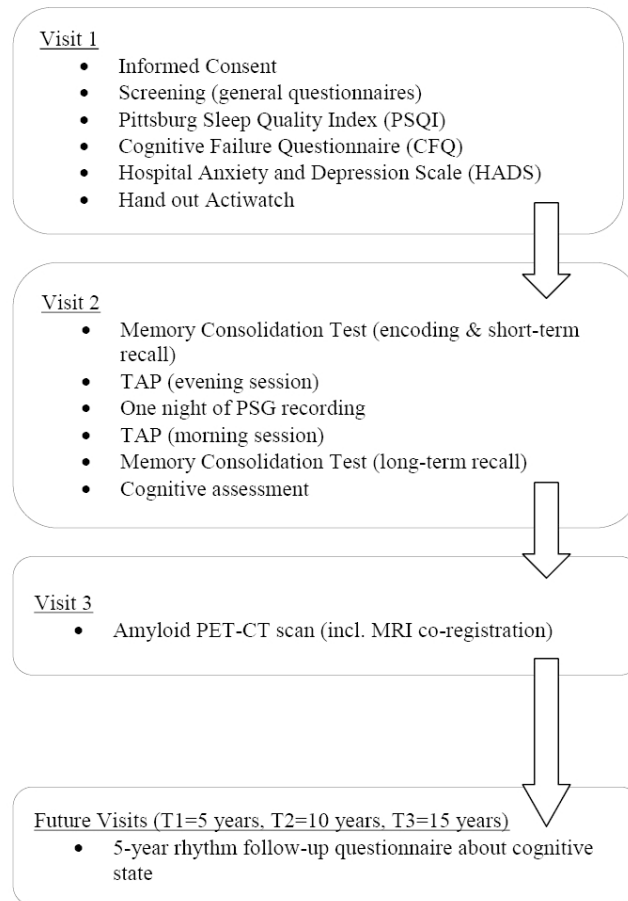
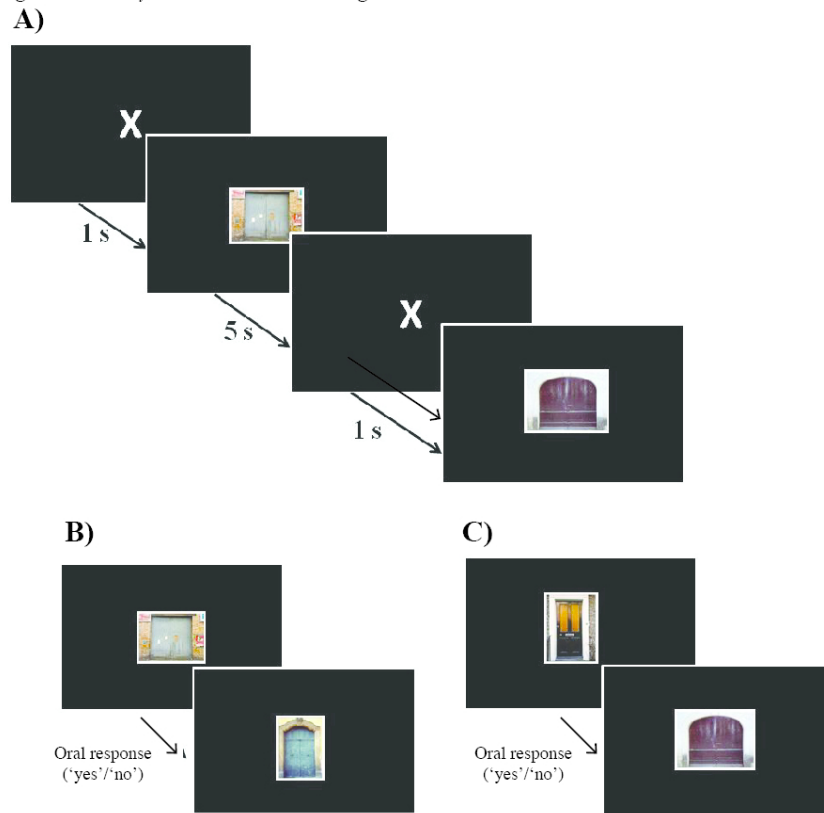


Figure 2: Overview experimental design

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Figure 3: Memory Consolidation Task Design



A) Example of Encoding trials - 120 doors separated by fixation cross, B) Example of short-term recognition trials (after approx. 10 min) - oral response (pressing spacebar to move to next stimulus), 30 targets and 15 distracters, C) Example of long-term recognition trials (after one night) - oral response (pressing spacebar to move to next stimulus), 90 targets and 45 distracters

Figure 3: Memory Consolidation Task Design

A) Example of Encoding trials - 120 doors separated by fixation cross, B) Example of short-term recognition trials (after approx. 10 min) - oral response (pressing spacebar to move to next stimulus), 30 targets and 15 distracters, C) Example of long-term recognition trials (after one night) - oral response (pressing spacebar to move to next stimulus), 90 targets and 45 distracters

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