

# Making libraries heard – the noiseless project

Helen Curtis – librarian



**NOISELESS!**  
**LESS NOISE more sleep**

[www.youtube.com/watch?v=WpQqXQs-Kmk](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WpQqXQs-Kmk)

## Why are hospital wards so infernally NOISY?

- 37% of patients in hospitals are disturbed overnight, says a NHS study
- UK wards are now on average 10 decibels louder than in the 1960s
- Staying in hospital causes some patients to go without sleep for days
- Lack of sleep is linked with stress, which can lower the immune system

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### Hospital wards as noisy as offices 'harm patient recovery'

Hospital wards can be as noisy as a busy office and are harming patients' recovery, a study finds.



By Rebecca Smith, Medical Editor

8:00AM GMT 02 Dec 2009

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Noisy hospital wards across the NHS may be breaking world health guidelines on noise limits set by the World Health Organisation, a conference has heard.

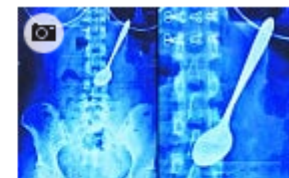
Research presented at The British Thoracic Society (BTS) Annual Winter Meeting, said noise levels affect patient well being, sleep quality and recovery times.

The study conducted at Musgrove Park Hospital, Taunton found that noise levels on an average ward, with many patients suffering from serious illnesses such as pneumonia or lung cancer, exceeded World Health Organisation (WHO) guidelines by more than 25 decibels (dB).

#### Health News

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#### In Health News



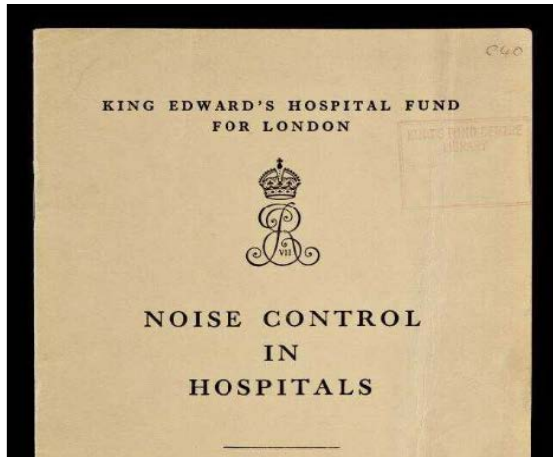
Weird X-rays



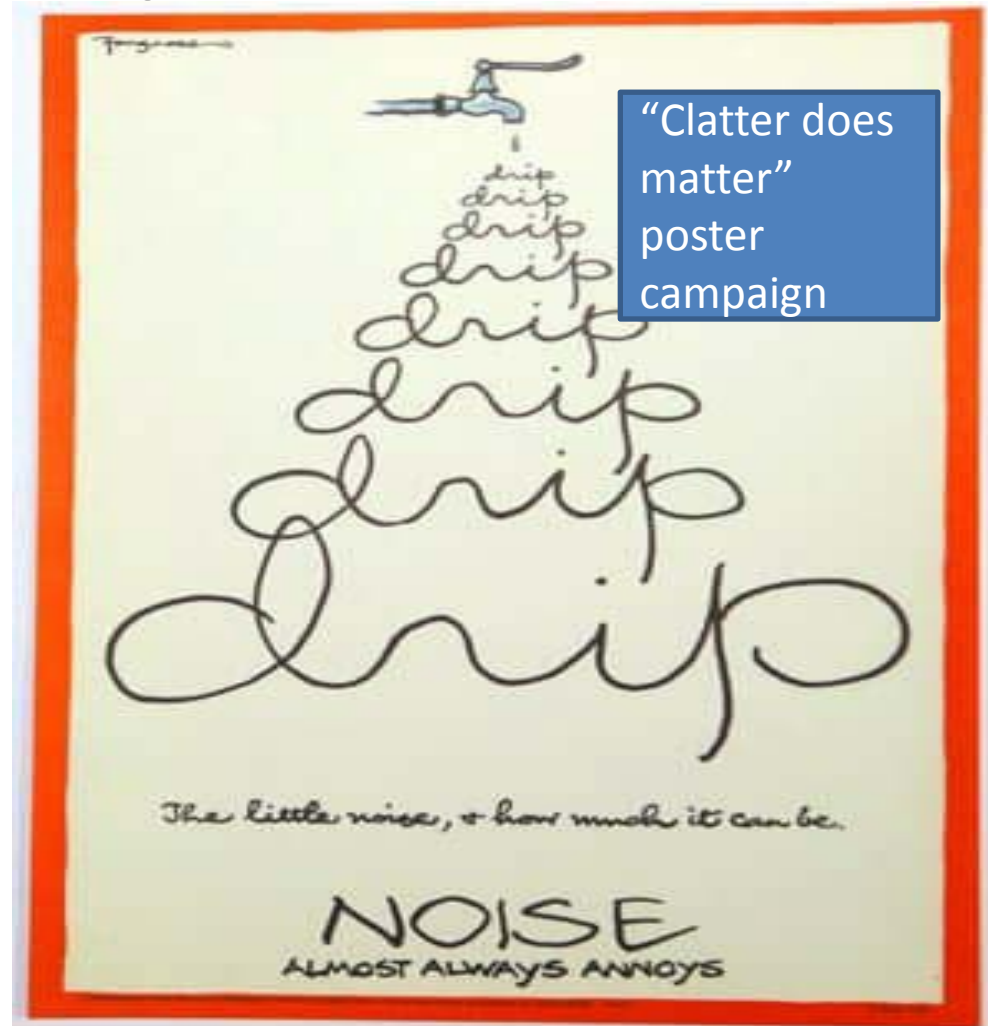
39% of patients were bothered by noise at night from other patients and 21% said they were disturbed by hospital staff

2014 NHS Inpatient Survey

# Not a new problem



Cats, jackdaws, tugs on the river and noise from a rifle range were all disturbing patients sleep in 1958



# Why does noise matter?

Causes patients stress and anxiety

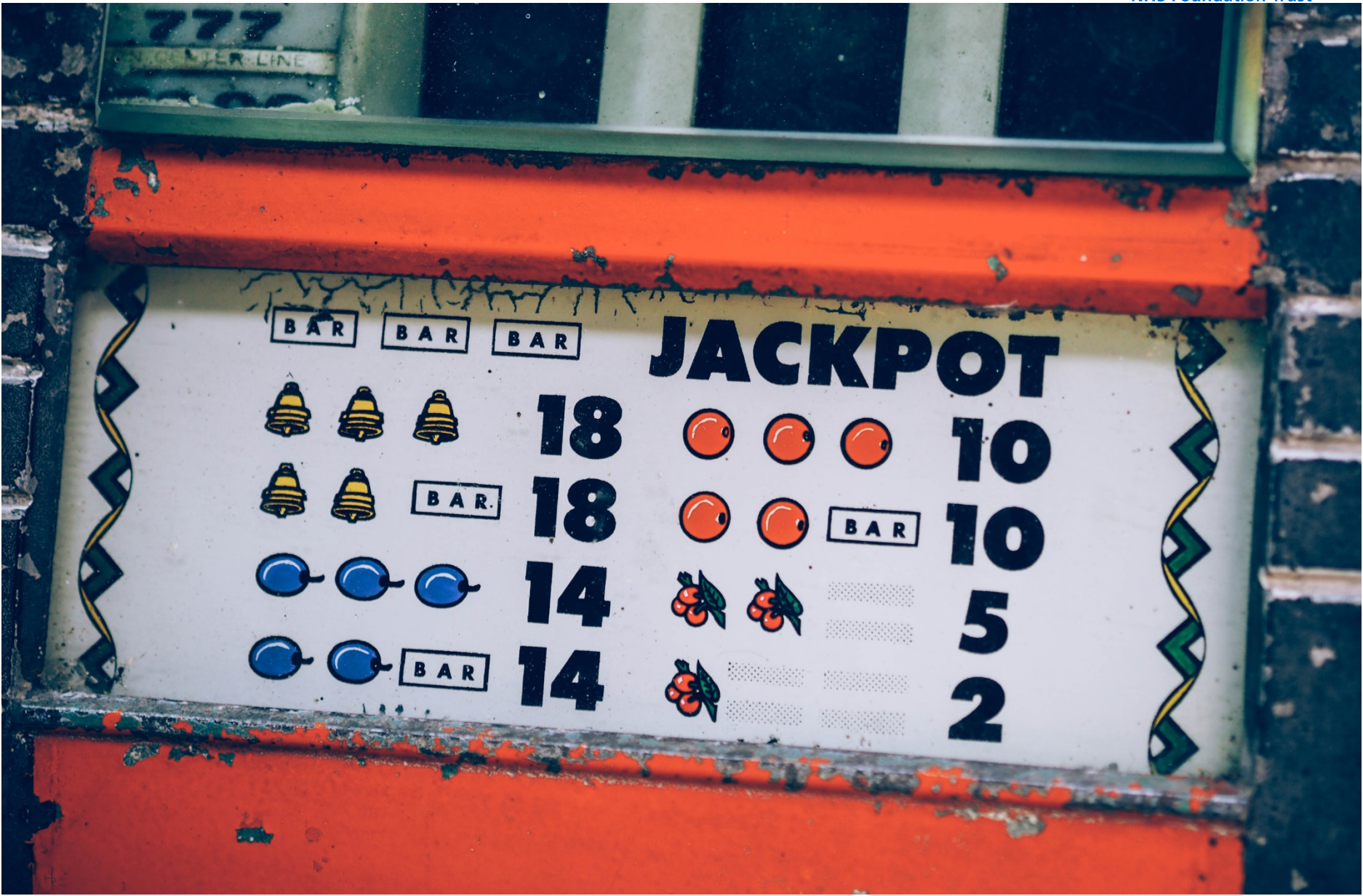
Disturbs sleep

Causes an immune response

Delays healing

Longer hospital stays





# Phase 1

Comprehensive literature review to inform full systematic review search strategy was formulated with staff from 3 universities

Project was to focus on a general ward - most noise research studies focus on ICU and neonatal units

Librarian given access to specialist acoustic and audio journals and databases

## Phase 2

- Audio recordings in MAU at Huddersfield from 24/7 over a 6 week period
- Patient self-reported ratings for sleep quality were assessed using a questionnaire
- Two night observations were conducted by research nurse and staff feedback opinion sought



## Phase 3

- Dissemination of main findings given at presentations at RCN conference
- Workshops for MAU staff on noise reduction strategies (managers – porters)
- Workshops at Compassionate Care in Practice Nursing and Midwifery conference
- Advisory group CHFT Directors of Nursing and Quality improvement for wider dissemination
- Paper being written for publication

This is a new website. We are still working on it. Your [feedback](#) will help us improve it.

Home > Resources > Reducing noise at night on a hospital ward

# Reducing noise at night on a hospital ward

Hospitals are noisy places at night which means patients do not always sleep well. This case study we illustrate how findings from interdisciplinary research informed a quality improvement project.

Themes:  
[Quality in experience](#)

Topic:  
[Quality](#)

Resource type:  
[Shared learning](#)

Source:  
[The user](#)

Published on:  
**7 November**



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## A million decisions campaign

Every day across the healthcare sector in England more than a million decisions are made that have a profound and lasting impact on people's lives and which influence the quality of healthcare and the cost of services. Follow the discussion on Twitter at #AMIDecisions



### The campaign

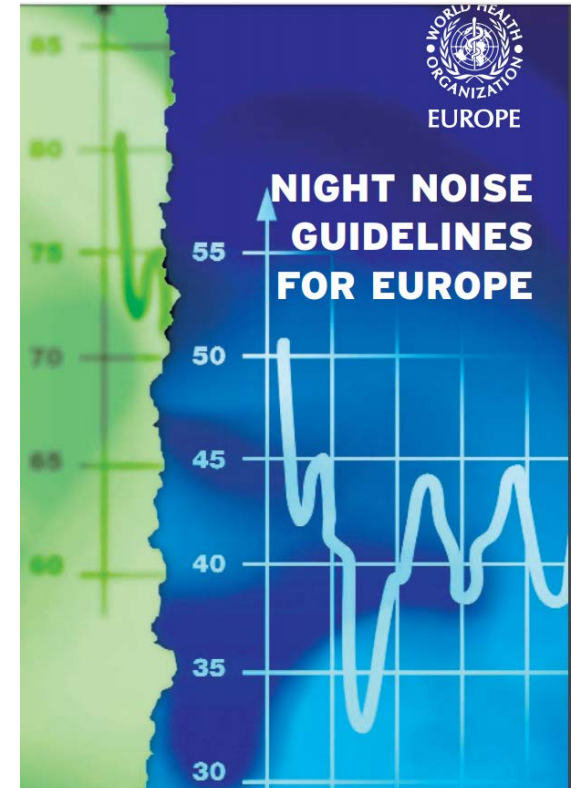
The [Chartered Institute of Library and Information Professionals \(CILIP\)](#) and [Education England \(HEE\)](#) are campaigning for decisions in the healthcare sector to be evidence-based, calling on everyone involved in policy making and care delivery to ensure the use of the skills of librarians and knowledge specialists in meeting their obligations

under [The Health and Social Care Act 2012](#).

Under the Act, The Secretary of State must ensure the use of evidence obtained from research and healthcare providers are used in the use of the best available evidence in their decision-making. Arms' length bodies and those commissioning or influencing health

## What we learnt about noise

Good research evidence difficult to find  
Combination of interventions and education  
of staff and patients seems most effective  
Audio recordings from the ward revealed  
several breaches of the WHO recommended  
noise levels per night but were no higher  
than comparable hospitals



## What I learnt about the research process

Don't be afraid to contribute - you are the expert on finding literature!

Enjoy the process and don't forget to record everything you have done and looked at...

Expect everything to happen really s-l-o-w-l-y

