



Geraldton Guardian  
17-Jul-2009  
Page: 13  
General News  
By: Kyree Meagher  
Region: Geraldton WA  
Circulation: 7671  
Type: Regional  
Size: 285.28 sq.cms  
Frequency: M-W-F--

## Software to help insomniacs

# Sleepless can now get SHUTi

KYREE MEAGHER

“

**... hopefully one day it will become available to the general public ...**

**—PROFESSOR LEE RITTERBAND**

GONE are the days of televisions, radios and computers being blamed for keeping you awake at night.

Insomniacs may soon rest easy with a new computer program designed to help users sleep better.

Insomnia affects 30 per cent of the population and is the most common health com-

plaint after pain.

Depression, anxiety and stress are linked to disturbed or constant lack of sleep and a lack of the nightly snooze can also lead to memory problems.

The program is called Sleep Healthy Using the Internet (SHUTi).

Professor Lee Ritterband, an associate professor of psychiatry and neurobehavioral sciences at the U.VA. School of Medicine, is the founding creator of SHUTi. He has been working on internet based treatments for over a decade.

He spoke passionately about this new program to staff and students on Wednesday at the Combined Universities

Centre for Rural Health in Geraldton.

Professor Ritterband explained how the program works and who it would be most beneficial for.

“Seventy-seven per cent of our last clinical trial was made up of females, as it is most common for women to experience insomnia.”

He said he would have liked to have seen this program be made public years ago.

“We are in the process of trying to find funding for a larger clinical trial.

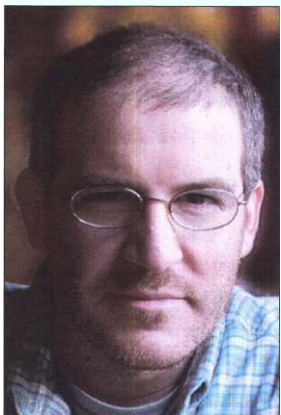
“So I am excited about the future of this program and hopefully one day it will become available to the general public in some way.”

There is no human analyst involved in the program, only the written steps of the computer driven software.

It gives advice and recommends suitable bedtimes based on the user's sleep diary that they must complete.

Sleepless victims also do quizzes, games and read stories to learn better habits which aim to improve their restless sleeping patterns.

Professor Ritterband was brought over from America through the Australian Primary Healthcare Research Institute and will stay in Australia for over two months.



SHUTi founding creator Professor Lee Ritterband