

August 2025



# REST-KY Research Project Newsletter

*University of Kentucky*

## Thank You to Our Participants

We want to extend our heartfelt gratitude to all of our current Researching Equitable Sleep Time in Kentucky Communities (REST-KY) participants for your ongoing involvement in this important study. Your participation is making a real difference in helping us better understand sleep health in Kentucky communities.

For those participants we haven't contacted recently, please know that we are actively working to reconnect with all of you and will be in touch soon. We appreciate your patience as we continue to move forward with this important work.

## Our Team

### Co-Directors:

Daniela Moga, MD PhD  
Mairead Moloney, PhD

### Project

### Coordinators:

Jennifer Malan  
Angel Pile  
Alex Gonzalez

### Research

### Assistants:

**We appreciate all of our participants and would love to spread more awareness on the beauty of the counties that we live in. Going forward, every REST-KY newsletter will include a section entitled County Spotlight showcasing one of the 12 counties we, and our participants, call home. In this issue, we will focus on: Lincoln County**

Named after Revolutionary War General Benjamin Lincoln, this historic county holds the distinction of being one of Kentucky's original nine counties, established in 1780. Lincoln County is home to

Era Prskalo, MA  
Nina Fonseca

Kentucky's first permanent settlement west of the Alleghenies and has played a vital role in shaping our state's heritage.

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Pictured above: The L&N Historic Depot was constructed in the late 1800s as a central station for the Louisville & Nashville Railroad. Throughout many years of operation, it functioned as a vital transportation link that helped connect Stanford with surrounding areas.



Pictured above: The Lincoln County Public Library in Stanford has its roots in community activism dating back to 1914, when the Stanford Woman's Club established the Lincoln County Free Public Library. Over the decades, the library evolved into today's

## Help Us Spread the Word!

The Rest KY research project is actively seeking new participants from the following counties:

**Bell County**  
**Jackson County**  
**Whitley County**  
**Lincoln County**  
**Pike County**  
**Estill County**  
**Adair County**

Do you know someone in these counties who might be interested in participating? We'd greatly appreciate you sharing information about our study with friends, family members, or community members who live in these areas. Please feel free to share our website with them, where they can screen for eligibility or schedule a call to learn more

[Click Here To Visit Our Website](#)

## Featured Article

Thanks to your participation in our study, we're learning important insights about sleep and social support in our Appalachian communities and we've recently published an article that looked at Wave 1 data entitled: "Pathways to better sleep: Depression, anxiety, and stress as mediators in the relationship between social support and insomnia severity in Appalachian adults."

Among our participants, 30% reported clinically significant insomnia, confirming that sleep is indeed a major health concern in our region. However, we found that strong social connections significantly reduce insomnia severity—but not in the way we initially expected. While those of you with better social support did report sleeping better overall, we discovered that social support works primarily by reducing depression, anxiety, and stress, which are the real drivers behind poor sleep.

Here's the encouraging news from these data: social support acted as a powerful buffer against psychological distress. Our data suggest that addressing sleep problems in our communities should focus on both strengthening social

connections and managing psychological well-being. Rather than treating insomnia alone, we think that future interventions that build on our region's strong community ties while addressing mental health could be particularly effective for improving sleep and overall health outcomes for all of us.

Click the link below to access the full article.

If you'd like a PDF version, or have problems viewing the article through the link, please email us at [restky@uky.edu](mailto:restky@uky.edu) and we'll send you the article as an attachment.

Thank you for being part of this important research that's helping us better understand our community's health needs!

[Click Here For The Full Article](#)

## **Share Your Story: Sleep Research in the Spotlight**

Kentucky Public Radio is working on a story about sleep health challenges in Appalachian communities and is interested in speaking with individuals about their personal sleep experiences. If you are a participant in our study and would like to share your story with their reporter, you can reach out directly to Justin

Hicks at [jhicks@lpm.org](mailto:jhicks@lpm.org) or 919-223-8054

Please note: This media opportunity is completely voluntary and entirely separate from our research study. Your participation or non-participation will not affect your involvement in our research in any way.

## **Meet Our Team**

We're excited to introduce new members of the Rest KY research team:

**Alex Gonzalez**



Alexander (Alex) Gonzalez is a native of Miami, FL, who comes to our team with years of experience in biomedical research dealing with sleep, substance use, Covid-19, and the gut microbiome. He'll be helping participants get started on their data collection and troubleshoot any technical issues they may encounter. Alex is interested in research on the pillars of health and how changing systems can translate to healthier communities. When not working, Alex likes to run, hike, and cuddle with his cat Harley. He's interested in learning more about Eastern KY and hopes to visit soon.

### Ena Prskalo



Ena Prskalo is a North Carolina native and a Ph.D. candidate at the University of Kentucky, where they study international crime. With years of experience in qualitative research, Ena brings a unique perspective to the grant team, where they oversee participant payments and help manage the project's financial operations. Outside of work, Ena loves making great pilgrimages to renaissance festivals and wrestling shows. They plan to stay in Kentucky and look forward to giving back to a place and community that has given them so much.

### **Susan Westneat**



Susan Westneat is a masters-prepared epidemiologist with over 25 years of research experience. Susan grew up in Chicago and lived in Minnesota, North Carolina, Michigan and upstate New York before settling in Lexington, Kentucky. Susan ensures the integrity of data collection and management for the REST-KY Study. Outside of work, Susan has been labeled “the cat lady” and enjoys her tabby cat Calvin as well as her son and daughter’s cats Tater, Poe and Tengo and dogs Yoshi and Moe.

### **Nina Fonseca**



Nina Fonseca is a Miami native and an undergraduate student at the University of Miami, where she studies Health Science and Public Health. Nina is interested in research that explores the correlations between sleep, health innovation, and disease prevention through lifestyle adaptations to promote well-being. Outside of work, Nina loves coffee and enjoys spending time with her mini-Australian Shepard, Birdie. She has family in northern Kentucky and always enjoys her trips to Kentucky!

*Thank you for your continued interest in the Rest KY research project. Together, we're working to improve sleep health outcomes across Kentucky.*

 College of  
Pharmacy

**Beyond** the Script

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