

NATO Flight Surgeons Conference,  
Garmisch, 24 Mar 22



# RAF AIRCREW FATIGUE: ASSESSMENT, MANAGEMENT, RESEARCH

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# Disclosure

Clearance number 187

- Any views or opinions that may be expressed represent those of the presenter, and not necessarily that of Her Majesty's Government, Ministry of Defence or the Royal Air Force.
- I may discuss specific products, but that does not confer endorsement
- I have no financial interest in this material
- I self-funded to be at this Conference.

# Scope

- Introduction
- Assessment
  - What is fatigue
- Management
  - Modelling, Aeromedical advice
- Research
  - Current and future research
- Other technologies

# What is fatigue

- **Fatigue:**

“A physiological state of reduced mental or physical performance capability resulting from sleep loss or extended wakefulness, circadian phase, or workload (mental and/or physical activity) that can impair a crew member’s alertness and ability to safely operate an aircraft or perform safety related duties” [ICAO]

# Introduction

- Familiar with the hazards of fatigue
- Military risks:
  - Disturbed sleep
  - Circadian disruption – deployment
  - Circadian mismatch – night VULs
    - Greater with advent of stealth.

# Introduction (2)

- Fatigue reduction – force preserver
- Active fatigue mitigation:
  - Higher performance
  - Increased productivity
  - Fewer errors, incidents and accidents.

# Introduction (3)

- Effective and safe flight scheduling
  - Fatigue avoidance guidance
  - Assurance with validated tools



# Introduction (4) – Despite this....

- Reports of fatigue in D-ASORs
- Adverse comments about fatigue:
  - Types of flying / platforms
  - Operational locations
- **Almost all experienced aircrew report falling asleep on duty**
- Comd(s) interest in fatigue.



# Introduction (5)

- ICAO SARPs support 2 distinct approaches to fatigue management:
  - **Prescriptive**
    - **Flight and duty time limits – Regulator defined**
  - Performance-based
    - Operator develops and implements Fatigue Risk Management System (FRMS), approved by the Regulator.

# Introduction (6)

- Key points from FRMS:
  - Need to assess (measure) fatigue, and
  - Safety Performance Indicators:
    - Metrics from: Roster, Fatigue Reporting, Subjective Fatigue Survey, Subjective Alertness/Sleepiness Assessment, Subjective Sleep/Wake Diary, Objective Performance, Objective Sleep, Fatigue Model.
- **No RA requirement to assess, or report SPIs**
- Therefore, Military rules are prescriptive.

# Fatigue guidance sources

- MAA RA2345 [\[link\]](#) – Management of aircrew fatigue
- MAA RA3207 [\[link\]](#) – Controller fatigue management
  - AP8000 [\[link\]](#) – RAF Safety Management Policy
    - Lflt 8213 [\[link\]](#) – Fatigue Management
- Group Air Staff Orders (GASOs) – Various
- ICAO [\[link\]](#) – Suite of Fatigue Management Manuals
- EWTD, EASA FTL
- HSE FRI [\[link\]](#) and calculator v2.3 [\[link\]](#)
- DSTL Sleep Education on DLE [\[link\]](#)

# Assessing / Measuring fatigue

Fatigue scales

Biomathematical models

# Evaluating fatigue [IATA]: Common Protocol for Minimum Data Collective Variables

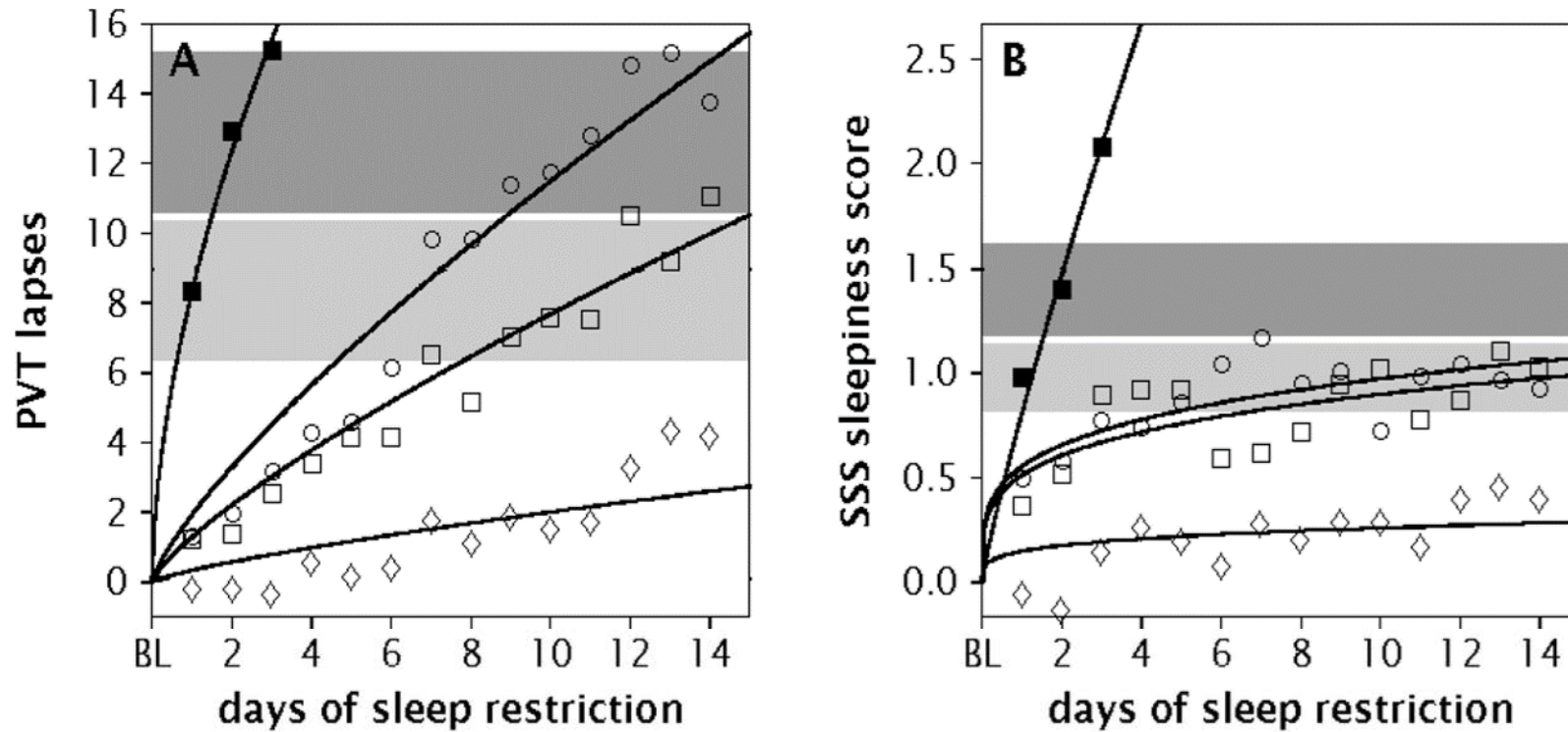
Level	Measure
1	Background Questionnaire, or Subjective survey assessment about operations
2	Sleepiness or alertness ratings, e.g. KSS or Samn-Perelli Fatigue Scale
3	Sleep/activity and duty logs
4	Actigraphy
5	Objective Performance Testing

# Subjective Fatigue Assessment: Samn-Perelli Scale (SPS)

Level	Measure
1	Fully alert, wide awake
2	Very lively, responsive, but not at peak
3	OK, somewhat fresh
4	A little tired, less than fresh
5	Moderately tired, let down
6	Extremely tired, very difficult to concentrate
7	Completely exhausted, unable to function effectively

# Subjective Fatigue Assessment: Karolinska Sleepiness Scale (KSS)<sup>1</sup>

Level	Measure
1	Extremely alert
2	Very alert
3	Alert
4	Rather alert
5	Neither alert nor sleepy
6	Some signs of sleepiness
7	Sleepy, but no effort to keep awake
8	Sleepy, but some effort to keep awake
9	Very sleepy, great effort to keep awake, fighting sleep
10	Extremely sleepy, can't keep awake



**Figure 1**—Neurobehavioral responses to varying doses of daily sleep. Four different neurobehavioral assays served to measure cognitive performance capability and subjective sleepiness. Each panel displays group averages for subjects in the 8 h ( $\diamond$ ), 6 h ( $\square$ ), and 4 h ( $\circ$ ) chronic sleep period conditions across 14 days, and in the 0 h ( $\blacksquare$ ) sleep condition across 3 days. Subjects were tested every 2 h each day; data points represent the daily average (07:30–23:30) expressed relative to baseline (BL). Panel A shows psychomotor vigilance task (PVT) performance lapses; panel B shows Stanford Sleepiness Scale (SSS) self-ratings; panel C shows digit symbol substitution task (DSST) correct responses; and panel D shows serial addition/subtraction task (SAST) correct responses per min. Upward corresponds to worse performance on the PVT and greater sleepiness on the SSS, and to better performance on the DSST and the SAST. The curves through the data points represent statistical non-linear model-based best-fitting profiles of the response to sleep deprivation (equation (1)) for subjects in each of the four experimental conditions. The mean  $\pm$  s.e. ranges of neurobehavioral functions for 1 and 2 days of 0 h sleep (total sleep deprivation) are shown as light and dark gray bands, respectively, allowing comparison of the 3-day total sleep deprivation condition and the 14-day chronic sleep restriction conditions. For the DSST and SAST, these gray bands are curved parallel to the practice effect displayed by the subjects in the 8 h sleep period condition, to compensate for different amounts of practice on these tasks.

**Why we cannot use subjective self-ratings to determine fatigue.**

Van Dongen et al. The Cumulative Cost of Additional Wakefulness: Dose-Response Effects on Neurobehavioral Functions and Sleep Physiology From Chronic Sleep Restriction and Total Sleep Deprivation. *Sleep*. Vol 26(2); 2003.



# Subjective Fatigue Assessment: Models (1)

- **System for Aircrew Fatigue Evaluation (SAFE)**
  - Output is KSS
- **Fatigue Assessment Tool by InterDynamics (FAID)**
  - Output is KSS
- **Boeing Alertness Model (BAM) aka Jeppesen Crew Alert<sup>®</sup>**
  - Output is KSS

# Objective Fatigue Assessment: Model

- Sleep, Activity, Fatigue, and Task Effectiveness model and Fatigue Avoidance Scheduling Tool (SAFTE-FAST)
  - Output is a numerical value (0-100)
  - Correlates with PVT
  - High values = less fatigue
  - Value at 70, and below = perform as well on PVT as someone who has BAC 80 mg%
  - Statistically significant increased chance of road, rail transportation safety accident ( $\leq 70$ )

# Objective Fatigue Assessment: FAST

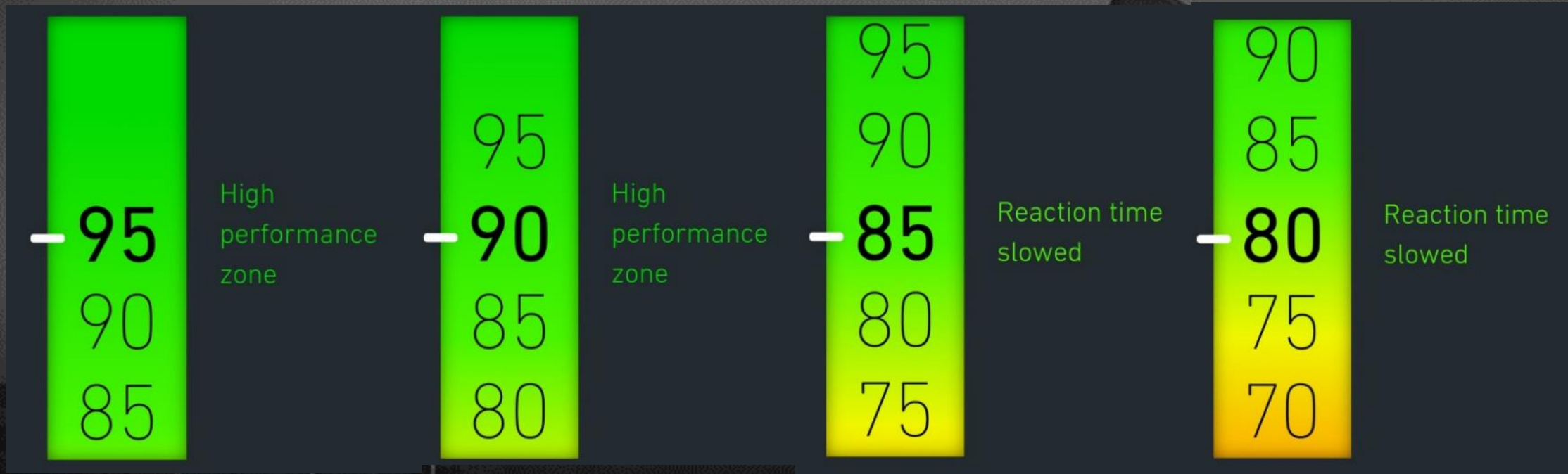
## Sleep time equivalence (sustained)

8 hrs

7 hrs

6½ hrs

5½ hrs



# Objective Fatigue Assessment: FAST

## Sleep time equivalence (sustained)

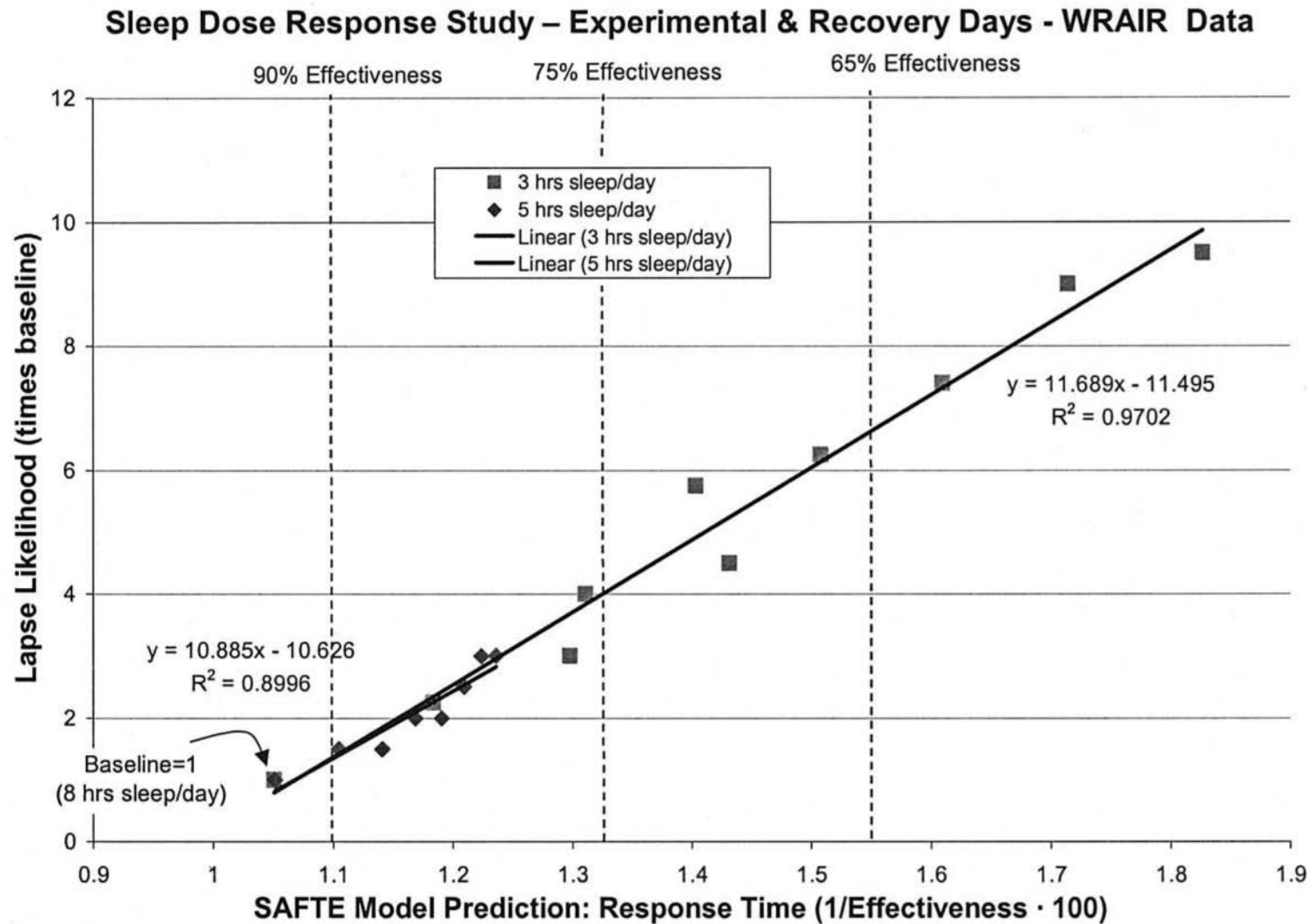
5½ hrs

5 hrs

4½ hrs

4 hrs





Hursh et al. Fatigue Models for Applied Research in Warfighting. Aviation, Space, and Environmental Medicine March 2004;75(Supplement 1): A44-A53.

**Fig. 7.** Likelihood of lapses on the PVT is a linear function of the inverse of effectiveness predicted by the SAFTE Model optimized for PVT speed. These data are based on the results of the sleep dose response study (6).



# Managing fatigue

Modelling / Aeromedical Advice

# Fatigue Modelling product

C-17 BZZ–MSP–BOI–MSF–BZZ



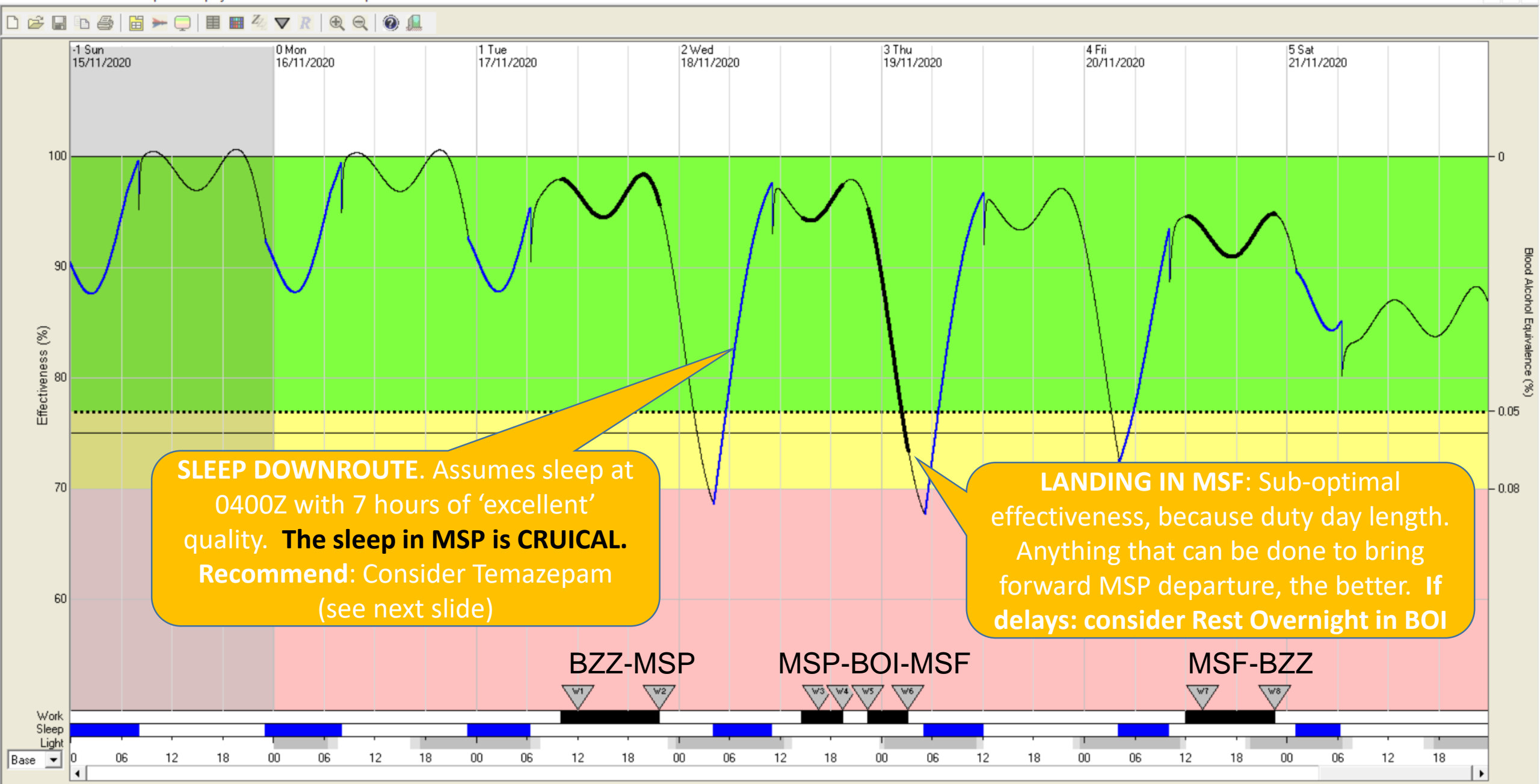
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16 Nov 2020 v1

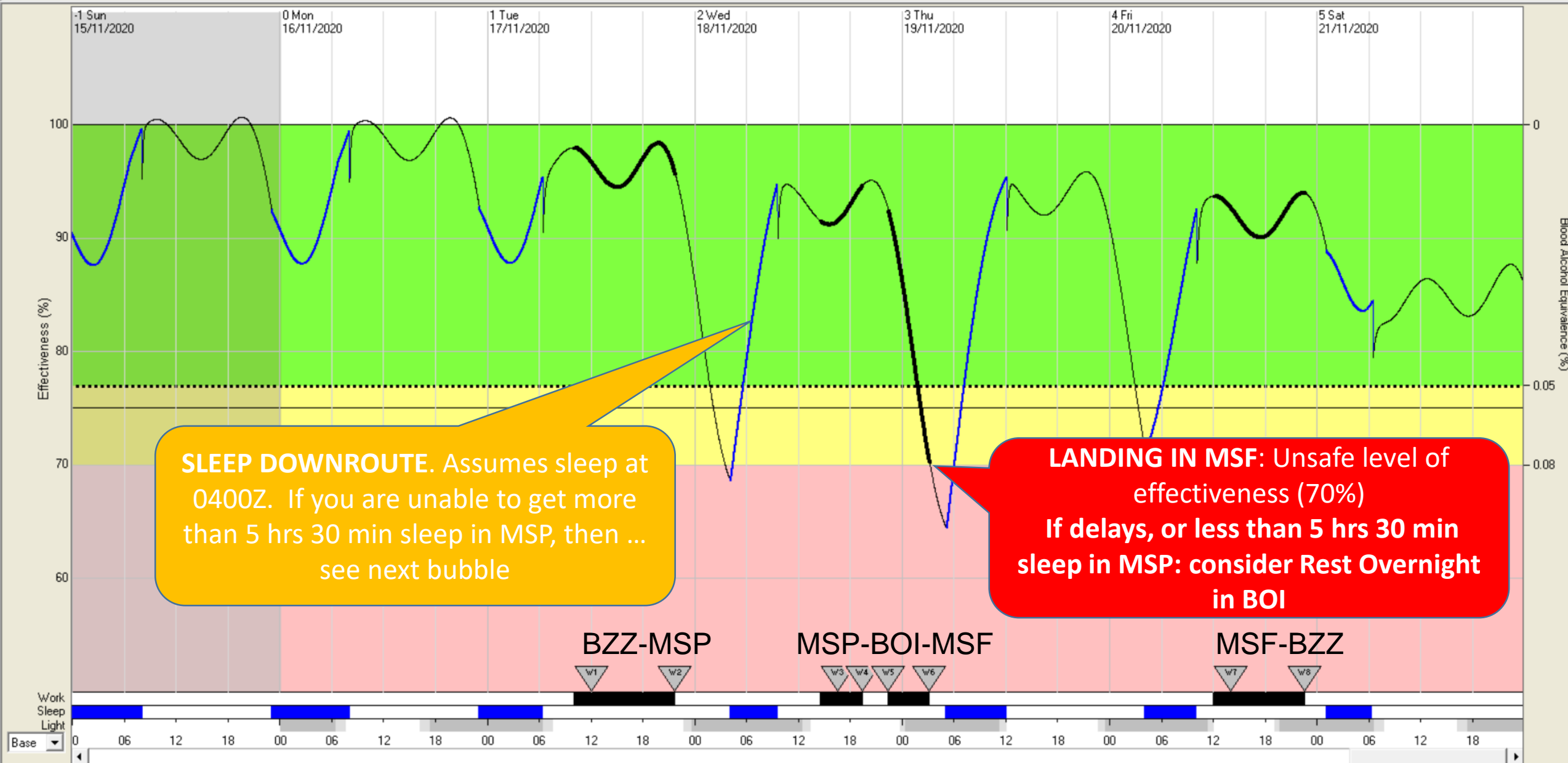
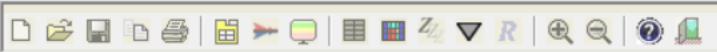
**Aviation Medicine Matters**



**SLEEP DOWNROUTE.** Assumes sleep at 0400Z with 7 hours of 'excellent' quality. **The sleep in MSP is CRUICAL.** Recommend: Consider Temazepam (see next slide)

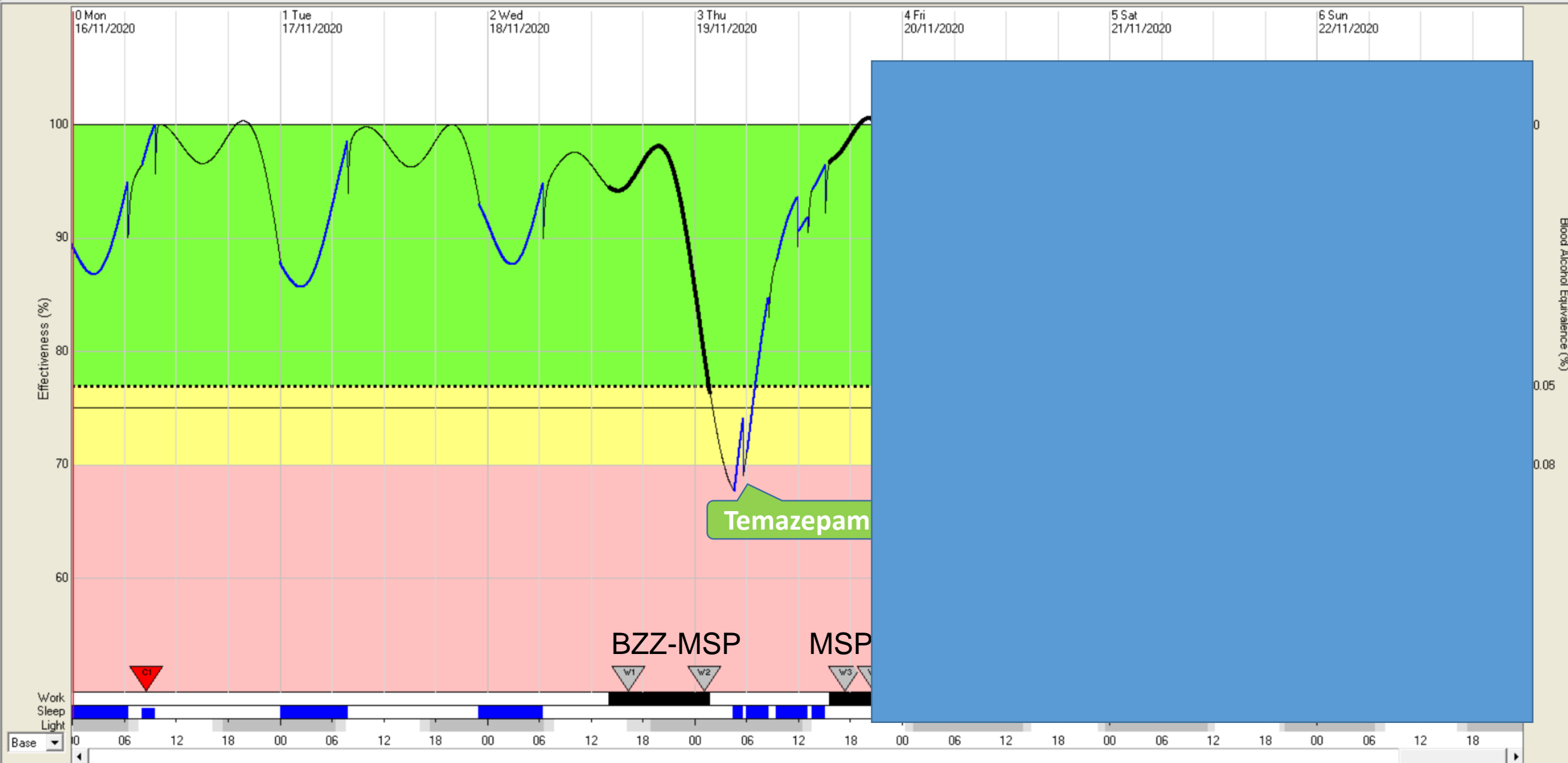
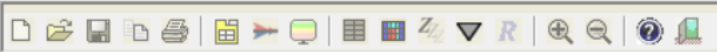
**LANDING IN MSF:** Sub-optimal effectiveness, because duty day length. Anything that can be done to bring forward MSP departure, the better. **If delays: consider Rest Overnight in BOI**





**SLEEP DOWNROUTE.** Assumes sleep at 0400Z. If you are unable to get more than 5 hrs 30 min sleep in MSP, then ... see next bubble

**LANDING IN MSF:** Unsafe level of effectiveness (70%)  
 If delays, or less than 5 hrs 30 min sleep in MSP: consider Rest Overnight in BOI



# Proposed C-17 Op TORAL Current Schedule (Crew 1 & 2) v4



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22 Apr 21 v4.0

**Aviation Medicine Matters**

# Current Schedule

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Arr			Dep	
L	Z		Z	L
		BZZ	0730	0830
1530	1230	AKT	1530	1830
0310	2240	KBL	1530	2000
0120	2220	AKT	0120	0420
0750	0650	BZZ		

## Crew 1:

Day 1- Deadhead Voyager from BZZ to AKT

Day 2- Crews C-17 from AKT to KBL

Day 3- Crews C-17 from KBL to AKT

Day 4- Deadhead C-17 from AKT to BZZ

## Crew 2:

Day 1- Crews C-17 from BZZ to AKT

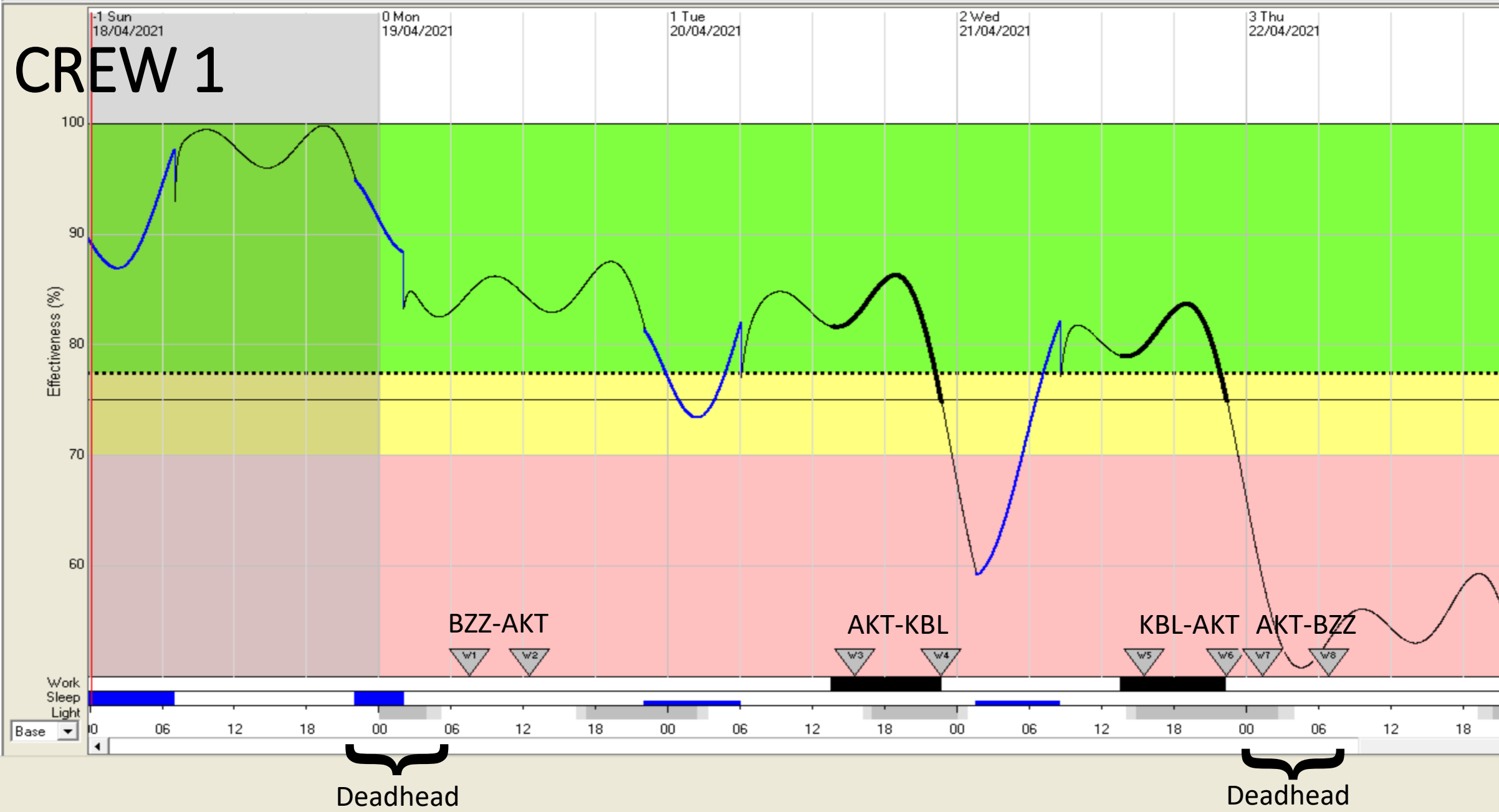
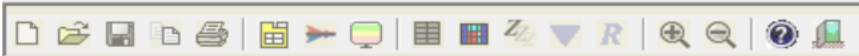
Day 2- Rest

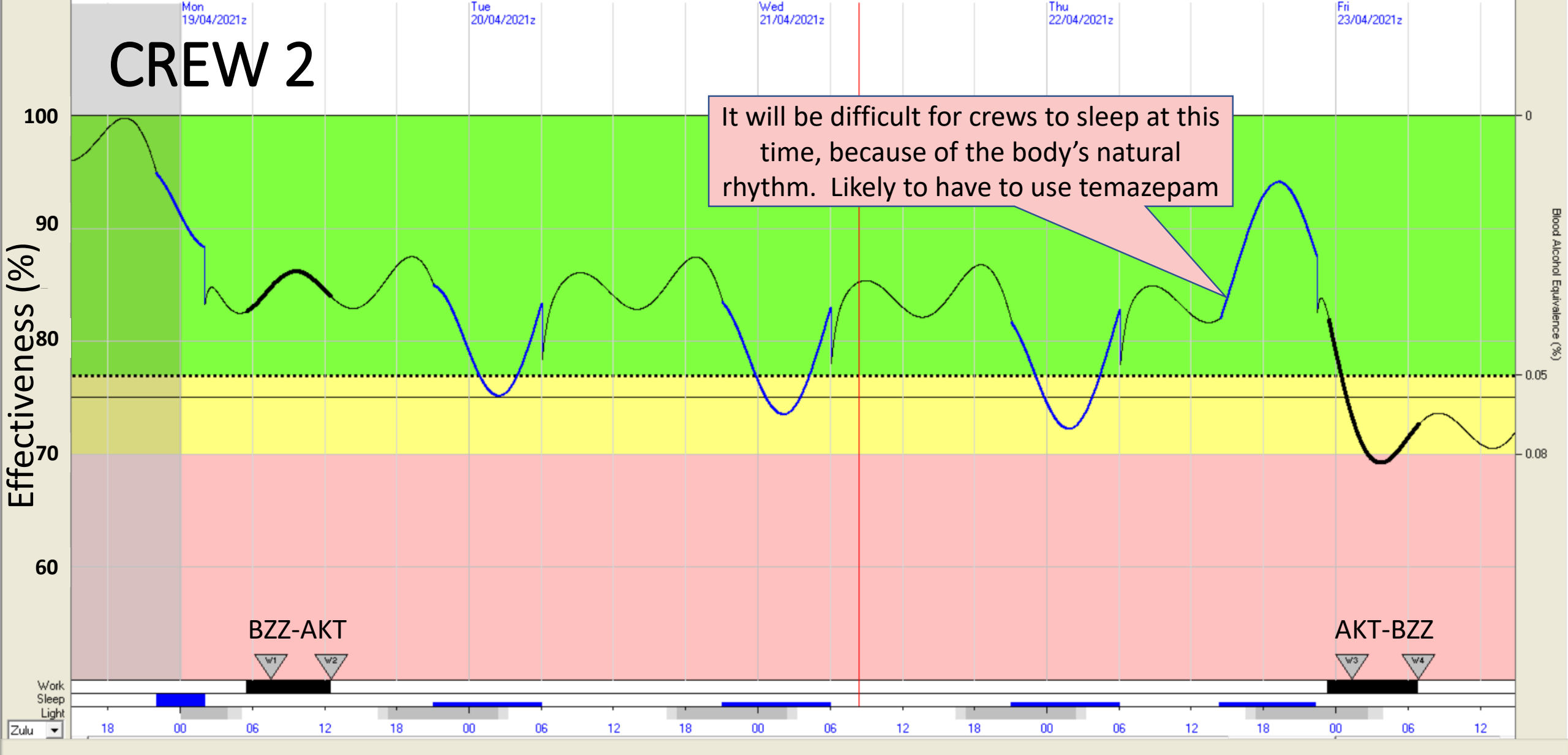
Day 3- Rest

Day 4- Crews C-17 from AKT to BZZ

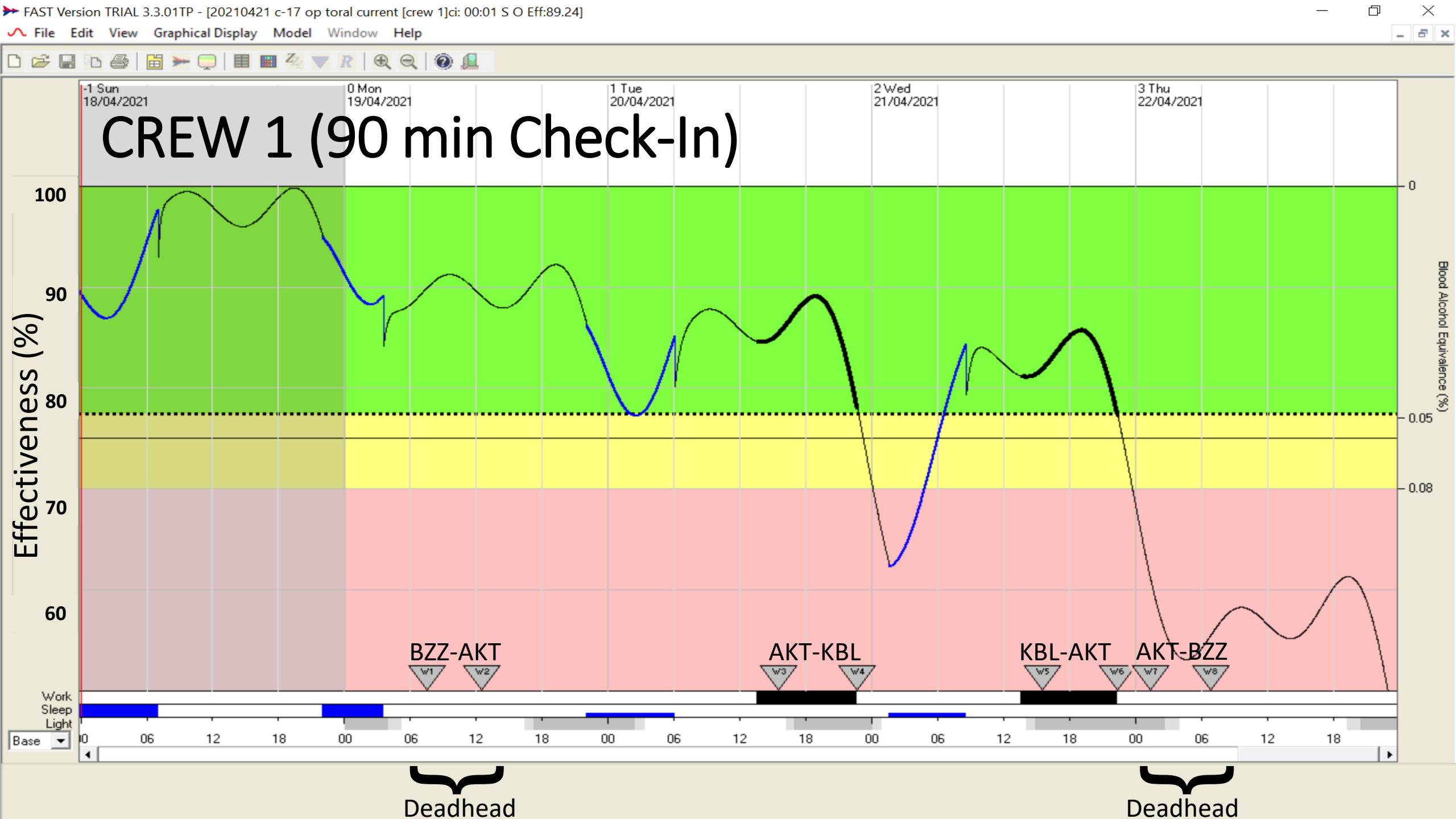
## V.3 Adjustments:

1. 90 minute check-in
2. Sleep quality improved from Poor to Fair (AKT ONLY)
3. 1&2 Combined
4. Deadhead flight times corrected

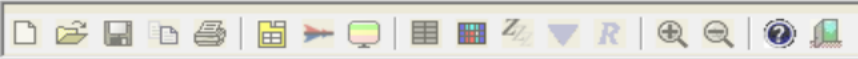




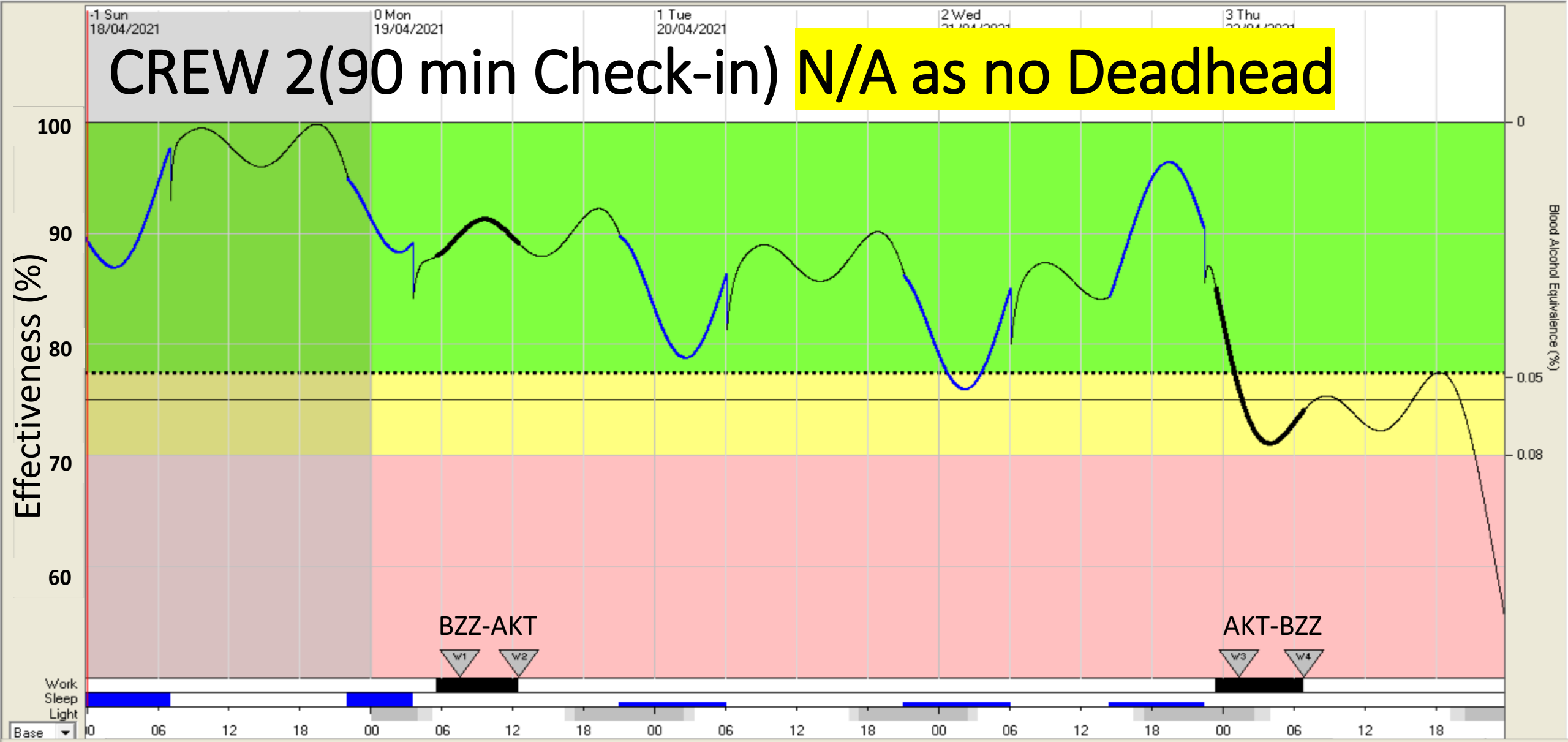
Effect of reducing check-in time  
to 90 min



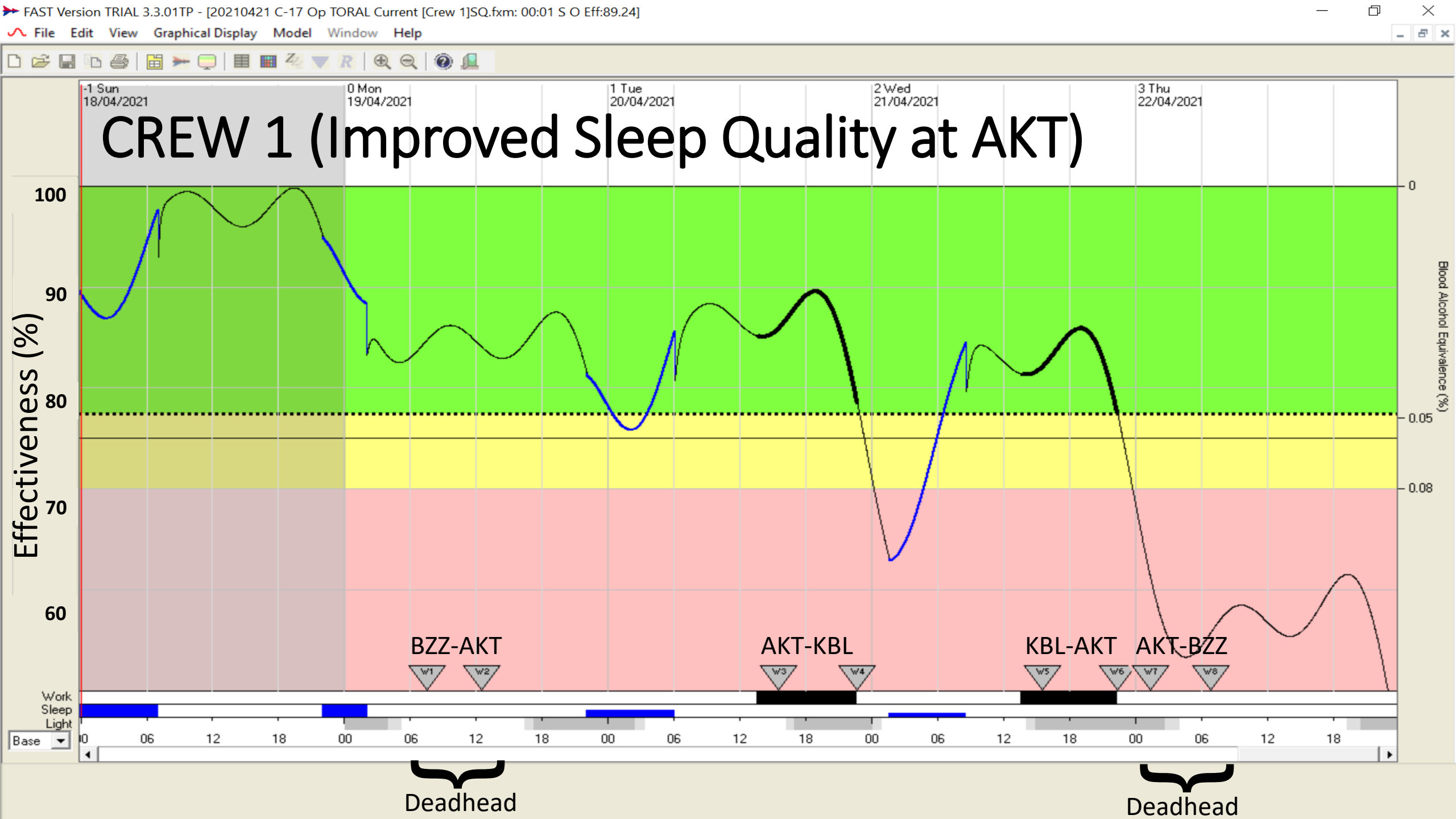


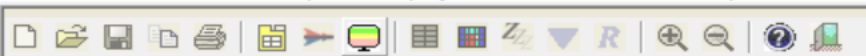


CREW 2(90 min Check-in) N/A as no Deadhead

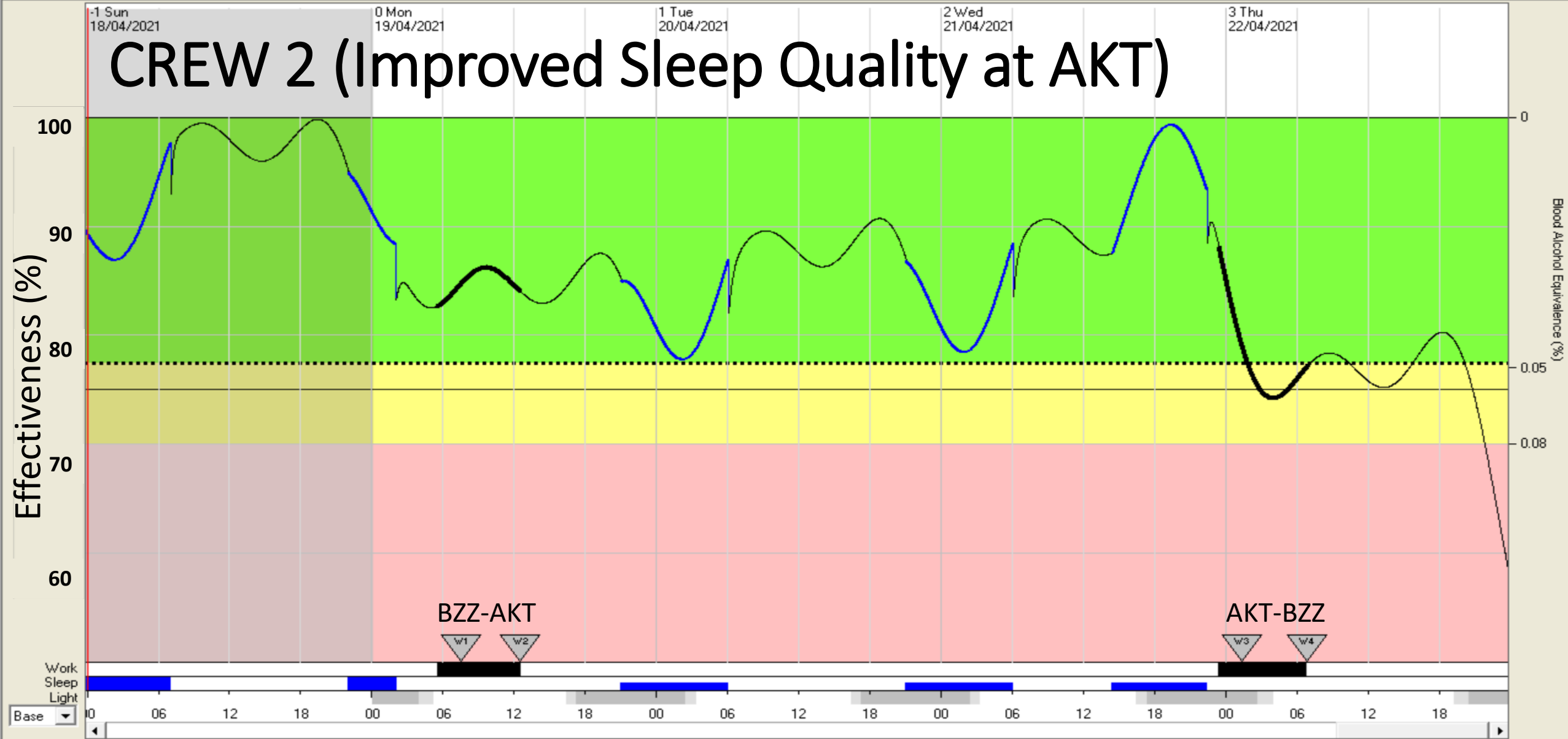


Effect of improving  
accommodation in AKT

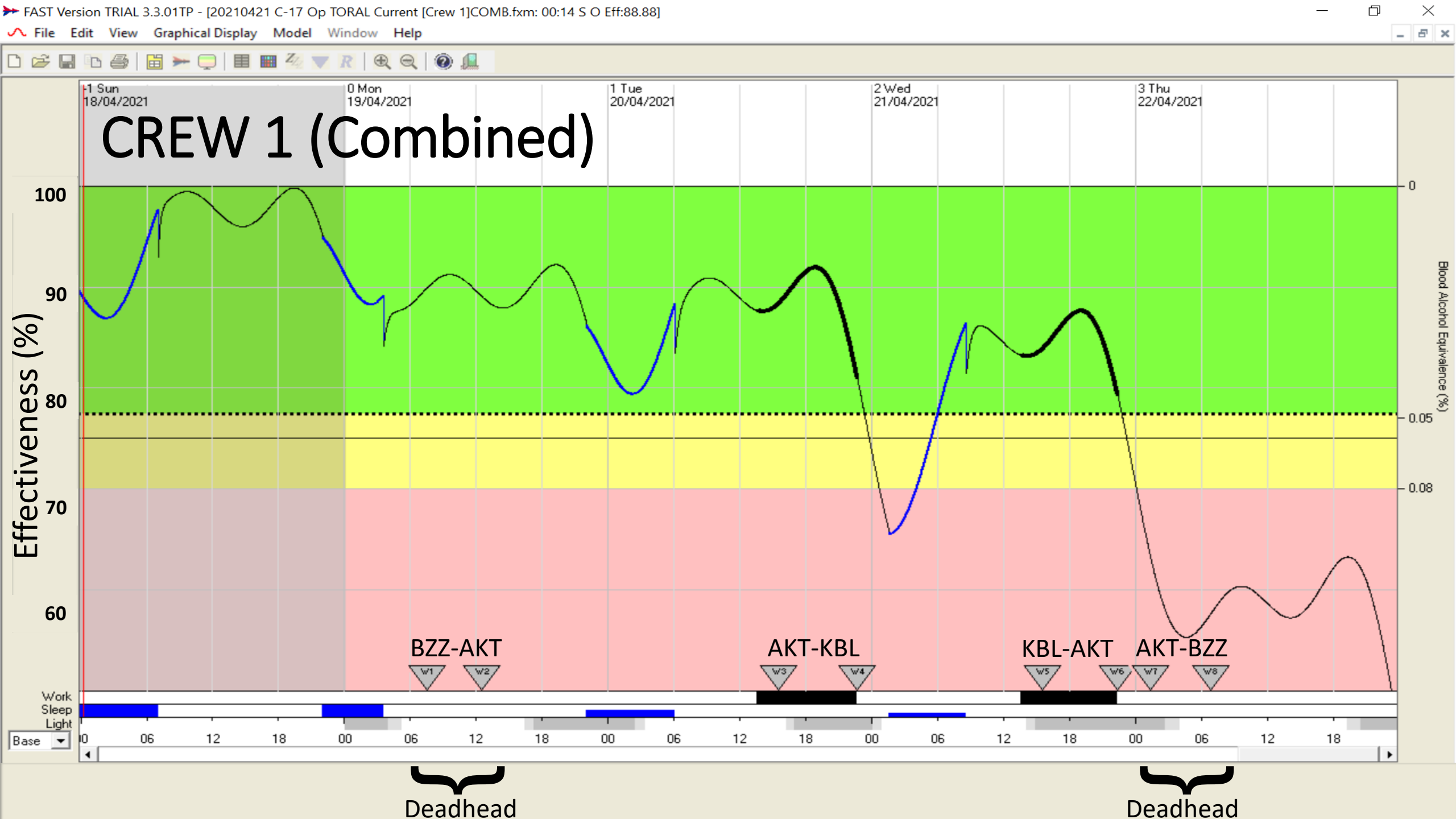




# CREW 2 (Improved Sleep Quality at AKT)

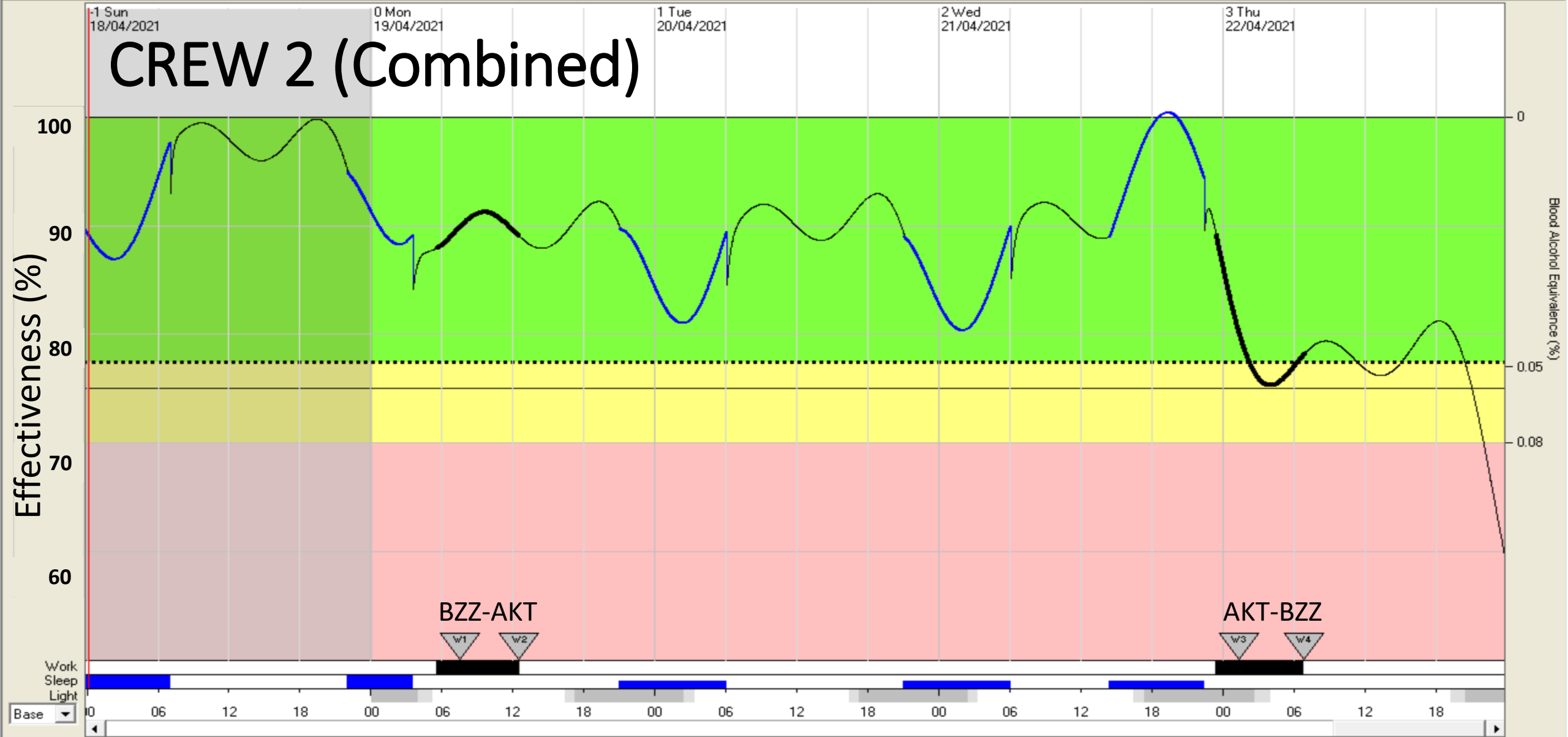


Effect of 90 min check-in for  
deadheading crews, and  
improving accommodation in AKT





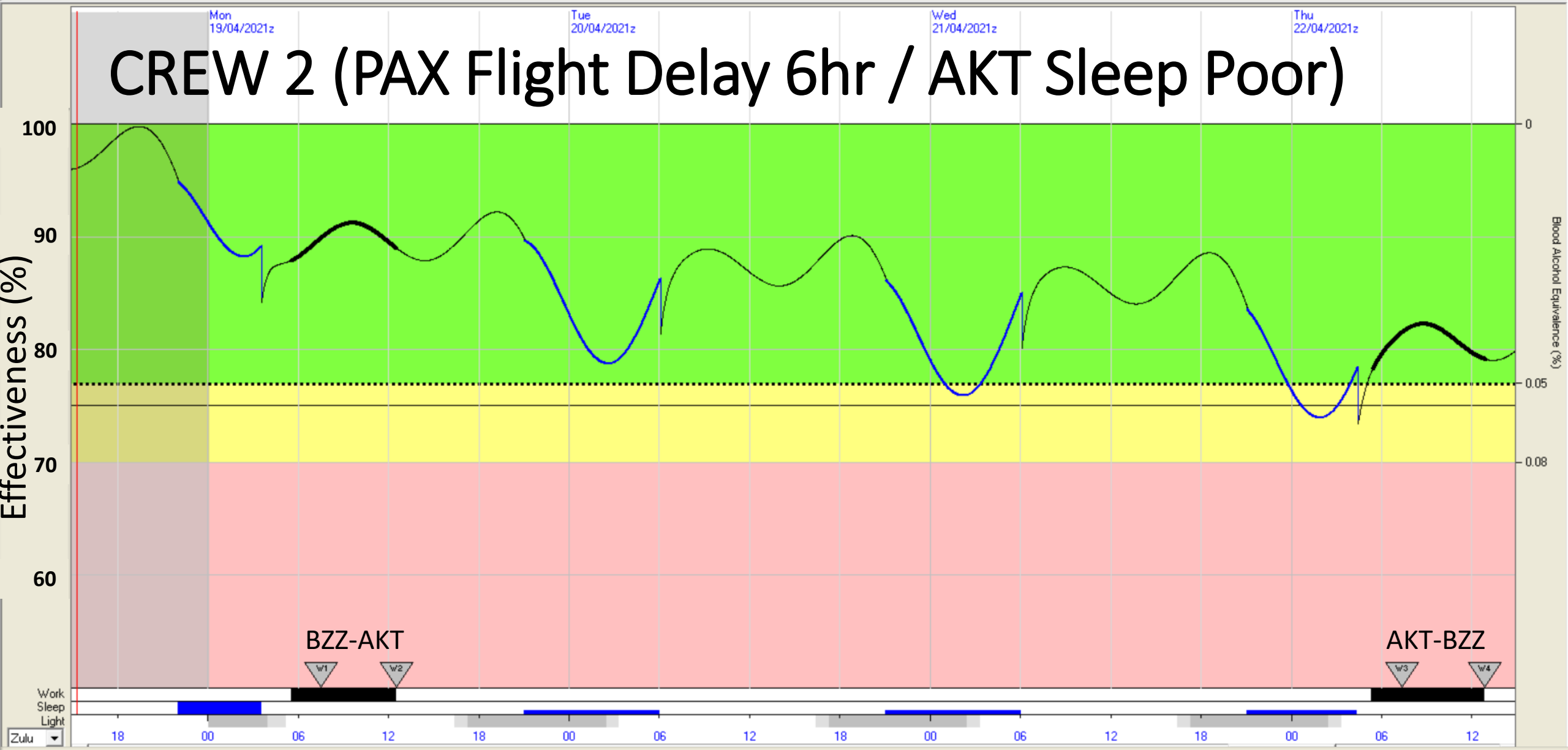
# CREW 2 (Combined)



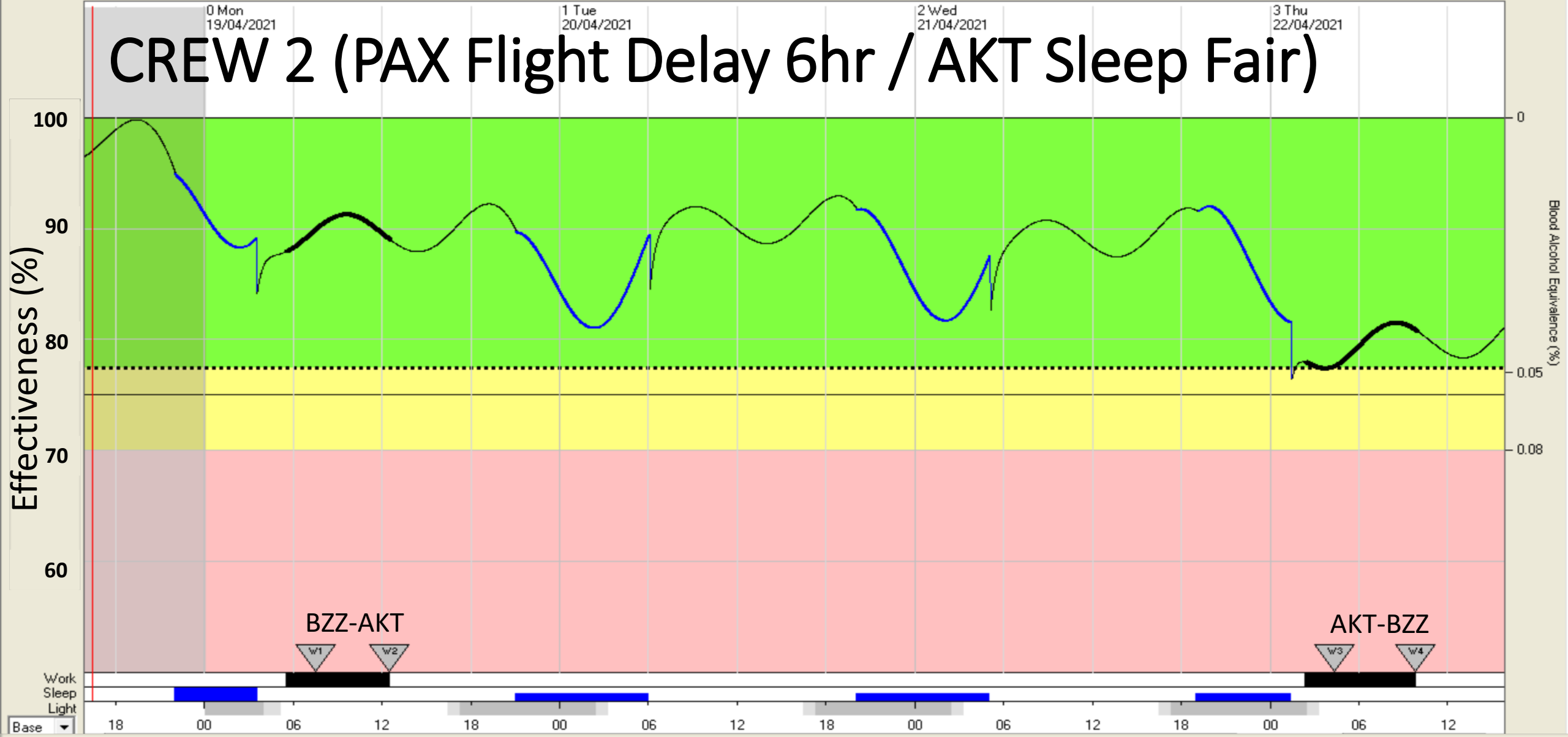
Effect of delaying AKT – BZZ  
departure



# CREW 2 (PAX Flight Delay 6hr / AKT Sleep Poor)



# CREW 2 (PAX Flight Delay 6hr / AKT Sleep Fair)





# Research

Overview

C-17 Fatigue project, and  
Future Research

# AOC 2Gp Fatigue research

- [AOC 2Gp]: Objective measurement of fatigue:
  - Quantify RtL in air and ground crew:
    - C-17 – Data collection complete; in analysis (wait FDM data)
    - A330 – Being designed
    - C-130
    - BAe-146
    - A400M – Being designed
    - Support personnel incl AGE, Movs, Ops



# C-17 Fatigue Project

Measurement of fatigue in C-17 pilots:  
Assessment of Operational Risk Matrix efficacy  
and relationship to Flight Data Monitoring  
parameters

# Introduction

- Fatigue is the number 1 air safety risk on the C-17 platform
- Permissive Crew Duty regulations
- Proscriptive Rules
- Trans-meridian travel

# Methods (1)

- **Data collected: 27 Feb – 7 Jun 21**
- This longitudinal study objectively measured fatigue in RAF C-17 pilots by actigraphy
- It analysed its' relationship with:
  - The existing Squadron ORM
  - A separate, study ORM
  - Samn-Perelli Scale at Top of Descent
  - Specified Flight Data Monitoring (FDM) parameters

# Methods (2)

- **Primary aims:**

- 1. Are C-17 pilots fatigued, as measured using actigraphy and the SAFTE-FAST model?
  - a. Measure effectiveness by asking participants to wear an actigraphy device continuously during the study.
  - b. Calculate effectiveness during flying duties and describe the data.



# Methods (3)

- 2. How does the current Squadron ORM and the study ORM correlate with the objective measure of fatigue?
  - a. Fatigue related questions from the current Sqn ORM will be evaluated with the calculated effectiveness score at the time of the ORM completion.
  - b. All questions on the proposed ORM will be evaluated with the calculated effectiveness score at the time of the ORM completion.

# Methods (4)

- 3. Is there a valid relationship between objective measure of fatigue and FDM data?
  - a. Effectiveness at time of approach (landing) will be calculated and evaluated against specific FDM data points, including:
    - (1) Deviation from optimal landing speed.
    - (2) Vertical acceleration on touchdown.
    - (3) Depth of landing.
    - (4) Time taken to select reverse thrust.

# Methods (5)

Total Sectors recorded  
n = 560

## EXCLUDED: Non-operational sectors

Training, currency  
and test flights  
n = 99

Positioning flights  
n = 16

## INELIGIBLE: Cancelled sectors

Cancelled sectors  
n = 7

In-flight re-filed  
sectors  
n = 2

## ELIGIBLE: Operational sectors

Operational  
sectors  
n = 436

# Results (1)

- Response rates:
  - Pilot participation: 29 / 42 (69%)
  - Sector participation: 261 / 436 (60%)

<b>PILOT SECTOR PARTICIPATION</b>	One/both	Both	One	None
Number of sectors	261 (59.9)	78 (17.9)	183 (42)	174 (40.1)

\*All numbers presented as  $n(\%)$ .

# Results (2) – Demographic data

<b>PARTICIPANTS</b>	Participant
Male	28 (97)
Age, mean(sd)	36.4 (5.6)
Exec role	10 (34)
Live in	0 (0)
Small children at home	16 (55)
Service length (yrs), median(IQR)	13.5 (11.3-17.9)
<b>Flight time (hrs), median(IQR)</b>	
Flight time total	2900 (2100-3800)
Flight time military	2700 (2030-3800)
Flight time military multi-engine	2050 (900-3000)
Flight time on C-17	1300 (600-2000)

\*All numbers presented as n(%) unless otherwise stated.

# Results (3) – Flight Rotations

FLIGHT ROTATIONS						
Base	UK	Europe	BME	USA	Africa	Total
BZZ	4 (3)	34 (21)	24 (15)	24 (15)	16 (10)	102 (64)
<i>(for forward basing)</i>	-	-	8 (5)	-	-	8 (5)
<b>BZZ sub-total</b>	4 (3)	34 (21)	32 (20)	24 (15)	16 (10)	110 (69)
Forward based						
DQM	-	-	46 (29)	-	-	46 (29)
NHD	-	-	3 (2)	-	-	3 (2)
<b>Forward based sub-total</b>	-	-	49 (31)	-	-	49 (31)
<b>Total</b>	4 (3)	34 (21)	81 (51)	24 (15)	16 (10)	159 (100)

\*All numbers presented as n(%).

# Results (4) – Sectors flown per rotation

<b>SECTORS FLOWN PER ROTATION</b>						
<b>Base</b>	<b>UK</b>	<b>Europe</b>	<b>BME</b>	<b>USA</b>	<b>Africa</b>	<b>Total</b>
BZZ	3 (2 – 4)	2 (2 – 3)	4 (2 – 6)	3 (1 - 6)	3 (2 – 4)	3 (1 – 6)
<b>Forward based</b>						
DQM	-	-	2 (2 – 4)	-	-	2 (2 – 4)
NHD	-	-	2 (2 – 2)	-	-	2 (2 – 2)
<b>Forward based sub-total</b>		-	2 (2 – 4)	-	-	2 (2 – 4)
<b>Total</b>	3 (2 – 4)	2 (2 – 3)	3 (2 – 6)	3 (1 - 6)	3 (2 – 4)	3 (1 – 6)

\*All numbers presented as mean(range).

# Results (5) – Effectiveness at TOD and landing

<b>EFFECTIVENESS AT TOP OF DESCENT AND LANDING</b>						
(n=261)	UK	Europe	BME	USA	Africa	Total
Top of Descent (TOD)	78 (77 – 79)	88 (84 – 91)	85 (77 -91)	85 (77 – 91)	86 (80 – 85)	85 (77 – 91)
Landing	77 (76 – 79)	85 (76 – 90)	85 (76 – 90)	85 (76 – 90)	85 (76 – 90)	85 (76 – 90)

\*All numbers presented as median(IQR).

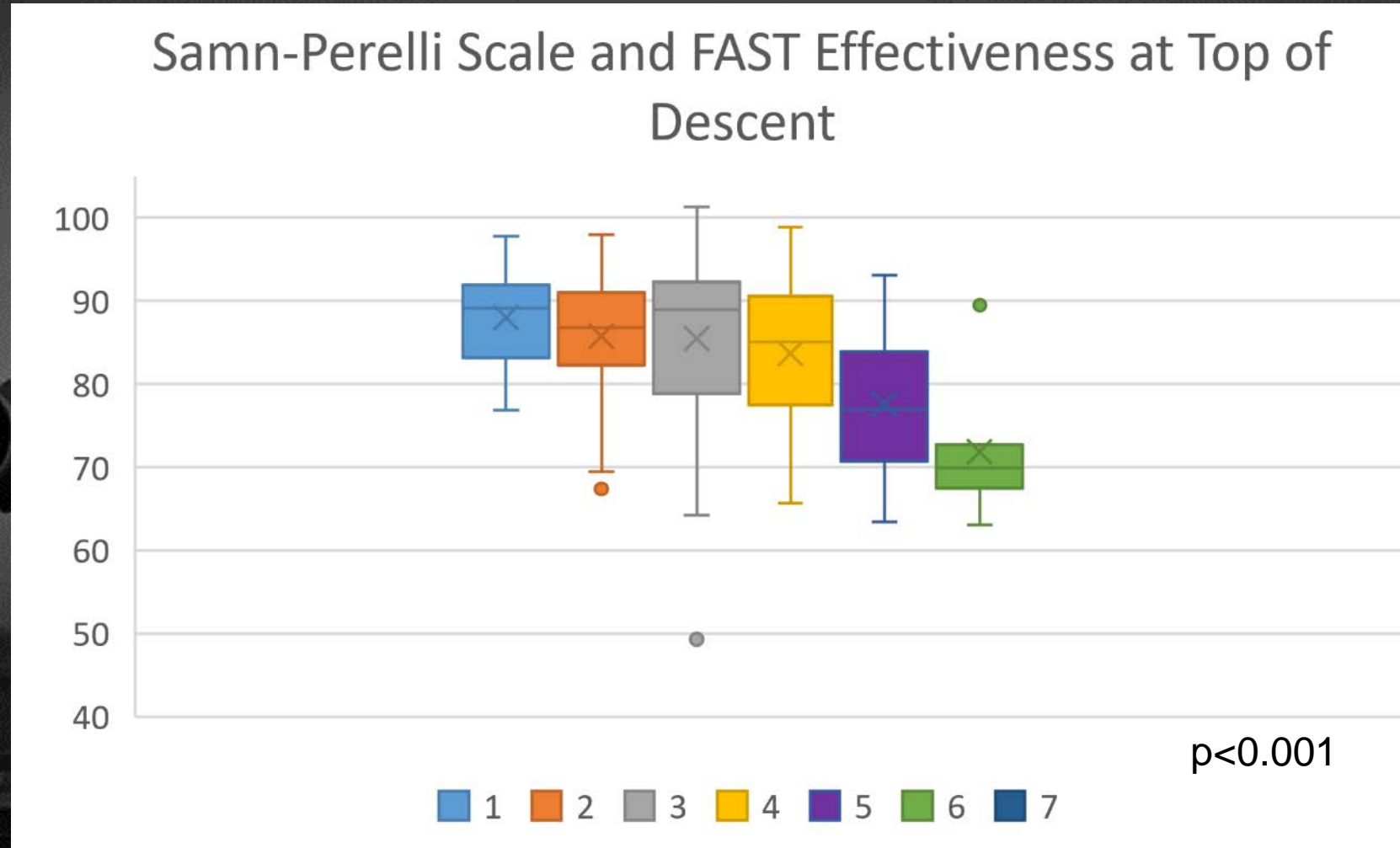


# Results (6) – No of landings and effectiveness

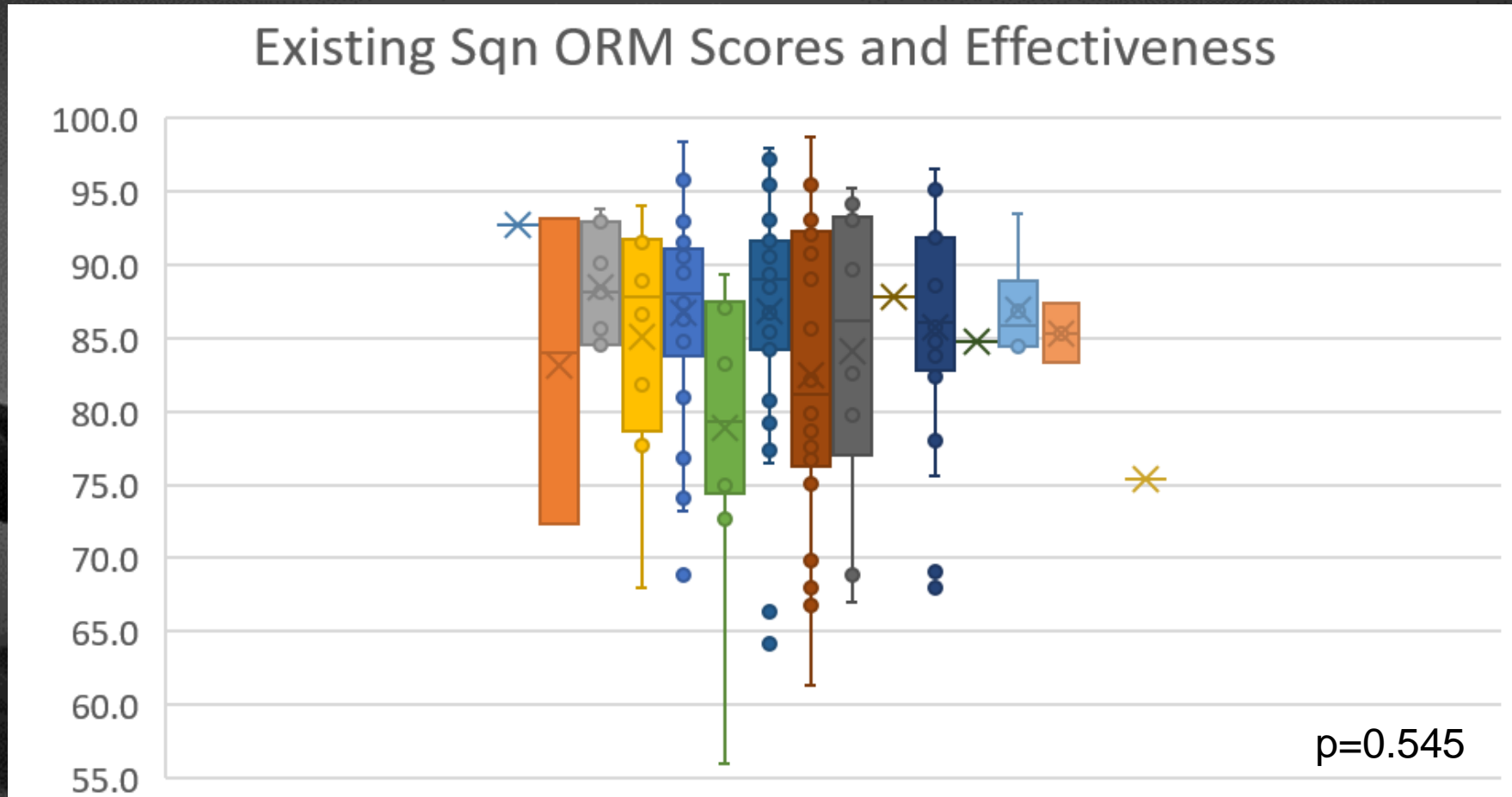
<b>NUMBER OF LANDINGS AND EFFECTIVENESS ON LANDING</b>						
(n=261)	UK	Europe	BME	USA	Africa	Total
Safe (>77%)	2 (1)	40 (15)	81 (31)	42 (16)	26 (10)	191 (73)
Sub-optimal (70 – 77%)	1 (0)	1 (0)	32 (12)	3 (1)	6 (2)	43 (16)
Unsafe (<70%)	0 (0)	0 (0)	21 (8)	4 (2)	2 (1)	27 (10)
Total	3 (1)	41 (16)	134 (51)	49 (19)	34 (13)	261 (100)

\*All numbers presented as n(%)

# Results (7) – SPS at TOD



# Results (8) – Existing Sqn ORM efficacy



Callsign		Op/Ex		Transop	
Airfields				Dates	

**Crew**

CAP				
CO				
ALM				
GE				
SVC				

Risk Factors		0	1	2	Score
<b>Mission</b>					
1	Task complexity [1]	Low	Moderate	High	0
<b>Timings</b>					
2	Task crew-In time (Local) [2]	0500 – 1459L	1500-0459L		0
3	Consecutive operating days	< 5	5-6	> 7	0
4	Planned CDT within 1h of max CDT	No	Yes		0
5	Number of Op legs in crew day	< 3	3-4	> 5	0
6	Take-off or landing in WOCL [3]	No	Yes		0
<b>Environment</b>					
7	Threat assessment	Low/Moderate	Substantial	Severe	0
8	En-route location mission support [4]	Meets Requirement	Below Requirement		0
9	En-route language difficulties	No	Yes		1
10	Airfield complexity [5]	Low	Moderate	High	2
11	Night departures/arrivals in crew day	< 3	3-5	> 6	1
12	NVG take-off or landing	No	Yes		0
13	Bird/wildlife hazard	Low	Moderate	High	0
14	En-route complexity and risks [6]	Low	Moderate	High	0
<b>Crew/Aircraft</b>					
15	Number of LCR Crew Members [7]	0	1-2	> 3	1
16	Pilot Composition	CAP/CO	CAP/CAP		1
17	Aircraft Captain C-17 PIC hrs	≥ 500 hours	< 500 hours		0
18	Co-pilot C-17 hrs	≥ 500 hours	< 500 hours		1
19	ALM C-17 hrs	≥ 500 hours	< 500 hours		0
20	Sectors by Captain in last 31 days	≥ 4	< 4		0
21	Sectors by Co-pilot in last 31 days	≥ 4	< 4		0
22	Sectors by ALM in last 31 days	≥ 4	< 4		0
23	Pilot MCT currency (3 months)	Both	One	Neither	0
<b>Theatre Task Recency</b>					
24	Captain	≤ 90 days	> 90 days		0
25	Co-pilot	≤ 90 days	> 90 days		0
26	ALM	≤ 90 days	> 90 days		0
<b>Worldwide AT</b>					
27	Captain previous similar mission [8]	< 6 months	6-18 months	> 18 months	2
28	Co-pilot previous similar mission	< 6 months	6-18 months	> 18 months	2
<b>Total</b>					<b>14</b>

# Discussion – Existing Sqn ORM efficacy

2	Task crew-in time (Local) [2]	0500 – 1459L	1500-0459L	
3	Consecutive operating days	< 5	5-6	> 7
4	Planned CDT within 1h of max CDT	No	Yes	
5	Number of Op legs in crew day	< 3	3-4	> 5
6	Take-off or landing in WOCL [3]	No	Yes	



$p < 0.001$

# Discussion – Existing Sqn ORM efficacy

Q	Q	p value
1	Task complexity	0.32
2	Task crew-in time	0.06
3	Consecutive operating days	1.00
4	Planned CDT within 1h of max CDT	0.001
5	Number of op legs in crew day	0.81
6	Take-off or landing in WOCL	0.003

p<0.001

# Discussion - FDM

- Wait for AsMA presentation in Reno
  - Mon 23 Mar 22 1600 hrs
  - TUSCANY B
  - SLIDE: Fatigue in Military and Commercial Aviation

$p < 0.001$

# Discussion

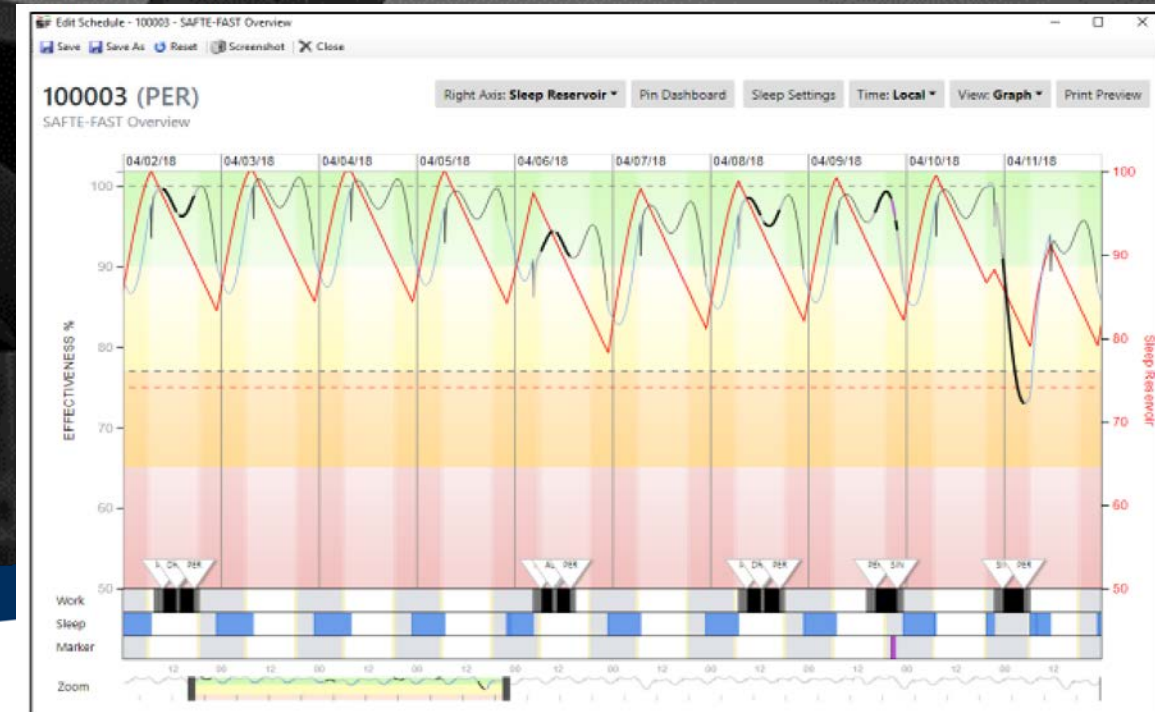
- Effectiveness cut-offs are scientifically sound
- Re-purpose the existing Sqn ORM (questions and 'math')
  - Re-measure to assess efficacy
- Can we engineer out the problems, without restricting FTL
  - Worrying sectors e.g. WOCL departures / arrivals
  - Modelling as standard and modelling within BOCS?
  - MOG issues (foreign airfield constraints)
  - Move towards a FRMS
  - Improvements to sleep
    - Military accommodation, other aids

$p < 0.001$



# Recommendations

- Procure automated fatigue analysis system
  - DSCOM, 2Gp, BZZ ASC – reviewed 4 products.
  - Scalable (desktop // integrated into BOCS)
  - Coherence AtRS
  - Cost minimal
  - Confirm military ‘real-world’ by measurement

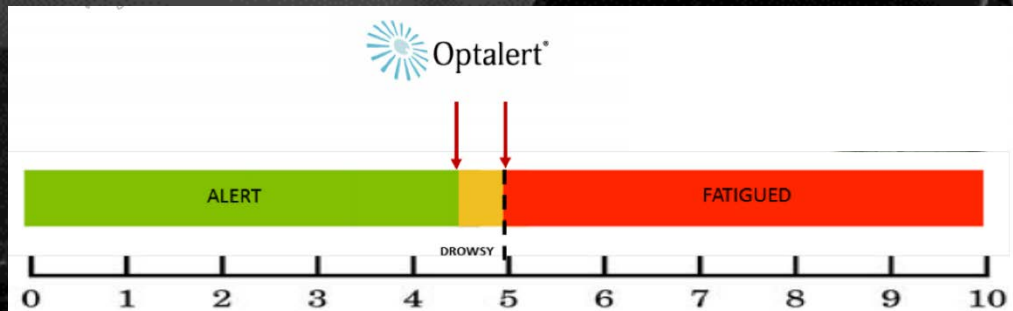


# Future Projects and Research

Platform	Problem / Tool	Level
RPAS (Watchkeeper)	Operating shift length without break, total CDT – Optalert	MSc
A400M (Atlas)	Fatigue assessment, ORM efficacy (FAST/SAFTE-FAST)	
RPAS (Desert Hawk)	CDT require 6 hrs sleep pre-flight. Preliminary assessment – TBD	
Hawk T2	ATC -> Station-wide ORM. Have flight performance data (training) - FAST	
(pan platform)	Temazepam / Melatonin use	
RW	Fatigue assessment, ORM efficacy (FAST/SAFTE-FAST)	MSc
A330 MRTT (Voyager)	Fatigue assessment, ORM efficacy (FAST/SAFTE-FAST)	



- “Drowsy / fatigue detection system” (Optalert™)
- Glasses: blinks
  - Duration of, and
  - Amplitude-Velocity ratio
- Niche: Onset of fatigue



# Summary

- Introduction
- Assessment
  - What is fatigue
- Management
  - Modelling, Aeromedical advice
- Research
  - Current research, future projects and research

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