

**Adelaide sleep expert to keep US army alert**

By Medical Writer JILL PENGELLEYThe Advertiser (Adelaide, Australia)

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THOUSANDS of teenagers are sleep experts, but Adam Fletcher went on to make it his career. Now aged 29 and one of the state's brightest young scientists, Dr Fletcher has been recruited by the US Army to help them research fatigue.

In December, he will give up his job at the University of South Australia's Centre for Sleep Research and move to Washington, DC.

Until then, he will devote some of his time to encouraging high school students in their studies.

Dr Fletcher is one of nine SA researchers who will today receive Young Tall Poppy science awards in recognition of outstanding achievement.

A graduate of Nuriootpa High School, Dr Fletcher was the 2001 Young South Australian of the Year.

He says teenagers should not worry if they do not know what they ``want to be" when they leave school.

``Sleep researcher" had not been on his list at that time.

``I wanted to be a pilot at one stage and a farmer, and a pharmacist," he said.

``It's not essential to know what you want to do in school.

``A lot of adults don't know where they're going. As long as you enjoy what you're doing and are working hard at the time."

Dr Fletcher is part of a group at the Sleep Research Centre which has been working with Qantas to study pilots at work.

``We track their sleep and their performance and we're trying to understand ways in which we can even further guarantee fatigue not being an issue," he said.

The other Tall Poppy award winners are Flinders University bioethicist Dr Wendy Rogers, UniSA computer researcher Dr Wayne Piekarski, Women's and Children's Hospital gastroenterology researcher Dr Taher

Omari, Queen Elizabeth Hospital kidney transplant specialist Dr Toby Coates, Repromed IVF laboratory director Dr Michelle Lane, University of Adelaide obstetrics and gynaecology researcher Dr Darryl Russell, UniSA information theory researcher Dr Alex Grant and University of Adelaide engineer Associate Professor Derek Abbott.

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