

Night shift nurses more likely to have poor sleep habits

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Nurses who work the night shift are more likely to have poor sleep habits, a practice that can increase the likelihood of committing serious errors that can put the safety of themselves as well as their patients at risk, according to a research abstract that will be presented Monday at SLEEP 2007, the 21st Annual Meeting of the Associated Professional Sleep Societies (APSS).

Arlene Johnson, of the University of Alabama at Birmingham, surveyed 289 licensed nurses while they were working on the night shift in the hospital setting, and classified the subjects as either sleep deprived or not sleep deprived. The results showed that 56 percent of the sample was sleep deprived.

"Reduction in the amount of sleep predisposes individuals to sleep deprivation, resulting in poor psychomotor performance," said Johnson. "Nurses who work the night shift may be particularly subject to sleep deprivation because of irregularity of sleep hours and disruptions in the circadian cycle. Poor psychomotor performance has been associated with an increase in error, which can be translated into an unsafe work environment. The identification of sleep deprivation in nurses is essential for maintaining safe working conditions."

The amount of sleep a person gets affects his or her physical health, emotional well-being, mental abilities, productivity and performance. Recent studies associate lack of sleep with serious health problems such as an increased risk of depression, obesity, cardiovascular disease and

diabetes.

Source: American Academy of Sleep Medicine

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