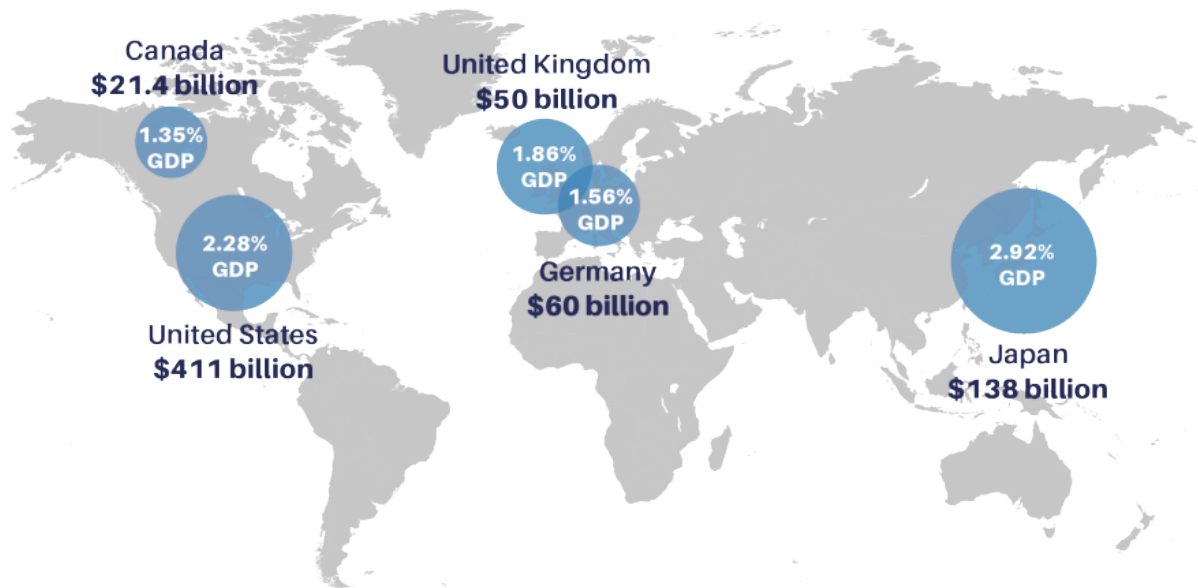


Lack of sleep costing US economy up to \$411 billion per year

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Map showing economic costs of insufficient sleep across five OECD countries.
Credit: RAND Corporation

A lack of sleep among the U.S. working population is costing the economy up to \$411 billion a year, which is 2.28 percent of the country's GDP, a new report finds.

According to researchers at the not-for-profit research organisation RAND Europe, part of the RAND Corporation, [sleep deprivation](#) leads

to a higher [mortality risk](#) and lower productivity levels among the workforce, putting a significant damper on a nation's economy.

A person who sleeps on average less than six hours a night has a 13 percent higher mortality risk than someone sleeping between seven and nine hours, researchers found, while those sleeping between six and seven hours a day have a 7 percent higher mortality risk. Sleeping between seven and nine hours per night is described as the "healthy daily sleep range".

In total, the U.S. loses just over 1.2 million working days a year due to sleep deprivation among its working population. Productivity losses at work occur through a combination of absenteeism, employees not being at work, and presenteeism, where employees are at work but working at a sub-optimal level.

The study - 'Why Sleep Matters - The Economic Costs of Insufficient Sleep'- is the first of its kind to quantify the economic losses due to lack of sleep among workers in five different countries - the U.S, UK, Canada, Germany, and Japan. The study uses a large employer-employee dataset and data on [sleep duration](#) from the five countries to quantify the predicted economic effects from a lack of sleep among its workforce.

Marco Hafner, a research leader at RAND Europe and the report's main author, says: "Our study shows that the effects from a lack of sleep are massive. Sleep deprivation not only influences an individual's health and wellbeing but has a significant impact on a nation's economy, with lower productivity levels and a higher mortality risk among workers."

He continues: "Improving individual sleep habits and duration has huge implications, with our research showing that simple changes can make a big difference. For example, if those who sleep under six hours a night increase their sleep to between six and seven hours a night, this could

add \$226.4 billion to the U.S. economy."

The U.S. has the biggest financial losses (up to \$411 billion, which is 2.28 percent of its GDP) and most working days lost (1.2 million) due to sleep deprivation among its workforce. This was closely followed by Japan (up to \$138 billion, which is 2.92 percent of its GDP, and around 600,000 working days lost).

Germany (up to \$60 billion, which is 1.56 percent of its GDP, and just over 200,000 working days lost) and the U.K (up to \$50 billion, which is 1.86 percent of its GDP, and just over 200,000 working days lost) have similar losses. Canada was the nation with the best sleep outcomes, but still has significant financial and productivity losses (up to \$21.4 billion, which is around 1.35 percent of its GDP, and just under 80,000 working days lost).

To improve sleep outcomes, the report outlines a number of recommendations for individuals, employers and public authorities:

Individuals - Set consistent wake-up times; limit the use of electronic items before bedtime; and physical exercise during the day.

Employers - Recognise the importance of sleep and the employer's role in its promotion; design and build brighter workspaces with facilities for daytime naps; combat workplace psychosocial risks; and discourage the extended use of electronic devices after working hours.

Public authorities - Support health professionals in providing sleep-related help; encourage employers to pay attention to [sleep](#) issues; and introduce later school starting times.

More information: www.rand.org/randeurope/research/e-sleep-economy.html

Provided by RAND Corporation

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