

# Many of America's most critical workers are short on sleep

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More than one-third of working Americans don't get enough sleep, and

the problem is greatest among the police, the military, health care workers and truckers, researchers report.

Their analysis of data from more than 150,000 employed adults between 2010 and 2018 also found that the rate of inadequate sleep (7 hours or less) rose from about 31% to nearly 36% during that time.

"Inadequate sleep is associated with mild to severe physical and [mental health problems](#), injury, loss of productivity, and premature mortality," said study author Jagdish Khubchandani, a [health](#) science professor at Ball State University in Indiana.

"This is a significant finding because the U.S. is currently witnessing high rates of chronic diseases across all ages, and many of these diseases are related to sleep problems," Khubchandani said in a university news release.

In 2018, professions with the highest levels of poor sleep included the police and military (50%), health care support occupations (45%), transport and material moving (41%), and production occupations (41%).

Among men, those who reported getting 7 hours or less of sleep a night rose from 30.5% in 2010 to 35.5% in 2018. Among women, that rate rose from 31.2% to 35.8%.

From 2010 to 2018, the largest increases in [sleep deprivation](#) were reported by men, multiracial adults, [older adults](#), those living in the western United States, and widowed, divorced, or separated people.

The study was published recently in the *Journal of Community Health*.

"There is no definitive cause found for these trends in sleep duration in

working [Americans]," Khubchandani said. "We see the workplace is changing as Americans work longer hours, and there is greater access and use of technology and electronic devices, which tend to keep people up at night," he noted.

"Add to this the progressive escalation in workplace stress in the United States, and the rising prevalence of multiple chronic conditions could be related to short-sleep duration in working American adults," Khubchandani said.

Employers should take steps to make sure their workers are getting enough rest, he suggested.

"Employers have a major responsibility and should use health promotion strategies to ensure that workers who struggle with sleep problems are assisted," Khubchandani said. "We all suffer when our bus and [truck drivers](#), doctors, and nurses are sleep deprived."

**More information:** The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention has more on [sleep](#).

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