

Mental stress factors are associated with sleep problems among older employees in Finland

August 10 2022



Credit: Unsplash/CC0 Public Domain

Mental stress factors at work and in private life are associated with sleep problems among older employees. As sleep and sleep quality are of key

importance for recovery, disturbances in sleep and recovery may affect not only the quality of life, but also health as well as work and functional capacity more broadly.

A new study conducted at the University of Eastern Finland and the University of Turku provides new insight into factors associated with sleep among older employees, which has remained an under-researched topic. The study included 2,771 Finnish municipal employees approaching their retirement.

The study examined how mental and physical working conditions, stressful life situations, and work-life balance were associated with [sleep problems](#) in older employees.

Work and nonwork stressors are associated with sleep problems

In another population study, more than half of Finnish men aged 60–69 and nearly 70% of Finnish women reported symptoms of insomnia during the past month.

"In our study, we identified four different components that are associated with mental [stress](#). These are physical workload and [shift work](#), psychosocial workload, social and environmental nonwork adversity, and life event- and health-related nonwork adversity," Professor of Psychology Marianna Virtanen of the University of Eastern Finland says.

Social and environmental nonwork adversity refers to loneliness and little interaction with one's neighbors. Life event- and health-related nonwork adversity refers to a stressful event in one's life, or the provision of informal care.

"The more an [employee](#) had work and nonwork stressors, the more problems they also had with sleep."

Flexibility is an important target for development

Different stress factors were associated with sleep problems in different ways: work-related stress was linked to current sleep problems, whereas loneliness and stress related to one's living environment predicted increasing sleep problems during the follow-up. Psychosocial working conditions were also associated with sleep quality.

"In this study, psychosocial working conditions were described by the contents and arrangements of work, such as opportunities for influencing and working hours, as well as by competence development, and fair management."

The project provides information on factors at which development measures and interventions could be targeted for older employees.

"Especially when there are stress factors in [private life](#), such as [severe illness](#) or death in the family, or being an informal caregiver for someone, flexible working hours are an important target for development," Virtanen concludes.

The research was published in the *Journal of Occupational & Environmental Medicine*.

More information: Marianna Virtanen et al, Components of Stress and Their Associations With Sleep Problems, *Journal of Occupational & Environmental Medicine* (2021). [DOI: 10.1097/JOM.0000000000002447](https://doi.org/10.1097/JOM.0000000000002447)

Provided by University of Eastern Finland

Citation: Mental stress factors are associated with sleep problems among older employees in Finland (2022, August 10) retrieved 10 May 2024 from

<https://medicalxpress.com/news/2022-08-mental-stress-factors-problems-older.html>

This document is subject to copyright. Apart from any fair dealing for the purpose of private study or research, no part may be reproduced without the written permission. The content is provided for information purposes only.