

# Sleep disorders in parents and children associated with more parental stress, study finds

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The study found that the rate of parental stress is greater among parents who have sleep disorders themselves, or have children with sleep disorders. Credit: Annie Spratt, Unsplash, CC0 ([creativecommons.org/publicdomain/zero/1.0/](https://creativecommons.org/publicdomain/zero/1.0/))

The rate of parental stress is greater among parents who have sleep disorders themselves, or have children with sleep disorders, according to a new study published this week in the open-access journal *PLOS ONE* by Ray Merrill and Kayla Slavik of Brigham Young University, U.S., and colleagues.

Sleep and stress disorders are known to have a two-way correlation, with stress promoting [sleep disorders](#) and sleep disorders promoting stress. Among [parents](#), there is thought to be a complex interplay between their own sleep, stress, mood and fatigue and their [children's](#) sleep.

In the new work, the researchers analyzed data on 14,009 employees insured by Deseret Mutual Benefit Administrator (DMBA) in 2020, all of whom had dependent children. Overall, 2.2% of the employees filed [medical claims](#) for treating stress and 12.5% filed claims for treating a sleep disorder, including insomnia, hypersomnia or sleep apnea. 2.0% of children filed one or more medical claims for a sleep disorder.

The researchers found that, after adjusting for age, sex and [marital status](#), rates of stress are 1.95 (95% CI 1.67–2.28) times greater in employees with a sleep disorder. Specifically, rates of stress are 3.00 (95% CI 2.33–4.85) times greater for those with insomnia and 1.88 (1.59–2.22) times greater for those with sleep apnea. In addition, the rate of employee stress is 1.90 (95% CI 1.33–2.72) times greater if their child has any sleep disorder, and 2.89 (95% CI 2.20–3.80) times greater if their child has insomnia. The study also found that if a child has a sleep disorder, the rate of parental insomnia and sleep apnea are both nearly doubled.

The authors conclude that a better understanding of the connections between parent and child sleep quality and parent stress may help improve treatment and lower the risk of these disorders.

**More information:** Relating parental stress with sleep disorders in parents and children, *PLoS ONE* (2023). [DOI: 10.1371/journal.pone.0279476](https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0279476)

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