

# On World Sleep Day, new research reveals the socioeconomic impact of insomnia on global populations

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Insomnia is the most common sleep disorder and exacts a significant toll on an individual's mental and physical health, quality of life and productivity. But the consequences of insomnia go well beyond the individual, with cascading effects on families, employers and global

economies.

Amid growing evidence that the condition is increasing globally, new research from RAND Europe, funded by Idorsia Pharmaceuticals Ltd, Switzerland and published on World Sleep Day 2023, reveals the societal burden and broad economic impact of insomnia, from countries within Western, Northern and Southern Europe as well as North America and Australia. Insomnia symptoms include difficulty falling or staying asleep or poor quality or non-restorative sleep.

The findings from the study show that chronic insomnia, which is defined as [insomnia symptoms](#) experienced at least 3 times per week for at least 3 months and impairment to [daily activities](#), is associated with reduced productivity in the workplace due to absenteeism and presenteeism, resulting in the loss of an average of 44–54 working days per year and, consequently, a substantial loss to annual GDP. Additionally, the study describes the 'hidden' or intangible costs related to what individuals with insomnia would be willing to trade to avoid the negative consequences of this condition (i.e. the well-being loss).

Using a range of methodologies, the researchers uncovered the following key findings:

- While approximately half of all adults are expected to experience some insomnia symptoms across the countries studied, one in 12 adults (approx. 8%) suffer from chronic insomnia.
- The annual economic cost of chronic insomnia due to productivity loss and in terms of gross domestic product (GPD) output, ranges from \$1.8 billion in Portugal to \$207.5 billion in the US. In terms of percentage of total GDP, this ranges from 0.64% in Austria to 1.31%, each, in the UK and Switzerland.
- An individual suffering from insomnia would on average be willing to trade an estimated 14.0% of their per capita annual

household income to recuperate the associated well-being loss. This translates to annual 'hidden' costs in the working-age population, ranging from \$1.5 billion in Norway to \$127.1 billion in the US, which reflect the aggregated value that working-age adults with insomnia from each country would be willing to trade.

Study co-author, Dr. Robert Romanelli, of RAND Europe said, "Understanding the broader societal effects of insomnia is crucial in identifying opportunities for scalable interventions designed to improve individual health, well-being and productivity of individuals. This would collectively benefit society as a whole. Unfortunately, insomnia is often underdiagnosed, suggesting that many people are not getting the clinical support they need."

Study co-author, Dr. Wendy Troxel, of RAND Corporation said, "We have known for a long time how devastating [chronic insomnia](#) can be for [public health](#) and well-being, but this report adds critical findings demonstrating the significant, global economic costs of insomnia across the working age population."

Among several recommendations for employers, policymakers and [healthcare professionals](#), the study highlights: Workplace interventions to identify and mitigate the impact of [insomnia](#), screening for the disorder to be incorporated into routine clinical visits and sleep health training for medical students and clinicians.

**More information:** The societal and economic burden of insomnia in adults: An international study, RAND Corporation (2023). [DOI: 10.7249/RR2166-1](https://doi.org/10.7249/RR2166-1)

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