

# Shift work linked to increased risk for depression, anxiety

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Shift work is associated with an increased risk for depression and

anxiety, according to a study published online Aug. 14 in *JAMA Network Open*.

Minzhi Xu, Ph.D., from the Huazhong University of Science and Technology in Wuhan, China, and colleagues explored the correlations of [shift work](#) with anxiety and [depression](#) in a cohort study including 175,543 employed or self-employed workers who participated in the U.K. Biobank baseline survey from 2006 to 2010. Of the participants, 16.2 percent reported shift work.

The researchers found that 2.3 percent of workers developed depression and 1.7 percent developed anxiety during a median follow-up of 9.06 years. Individuals who reported engaging in shift work, or shift workers, had an elevated risk for depression and anxiety in the fully adjusted model (hazard ratios, 1.22 and 1.16, respectively); there was a [positive association](#) seen for the risk with shift frequency.

No significant difference was observed among shift workers for night shifts and nonnight shifts. A negative association was seen for years of shift work with the risk for depression and anxiety in the dose-association analyses. The main potentially modifiable mediators were smoking, sedentary time, [body mass index](#), and sleep duration; these mediators explained 31.3 and 21.2 percent of the association between shift work and depression and between shift work and anxiety, respectively.

"Our study not only supports that shift work should be considered an occupational hazard, but also provides evidence for the urgent need for the development of public health interventions that promote [healthy lifestyles](#) aimed at improving the mental health of shift workers," the authors write.

**More information:** Minzhi Xu et al, Lifestyle Factors in the

Association of Shift Work and Depression and Anxiety, *JAMA Network Open* (2023). [DOI: 10.1001/jamanetworkopen.2023.28798](https://doi.org/10.1001/jamanetworkopen.2023.28798)

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