

Poor work performance among Japanese employees strongly associated with depressive symptoms and indefinite complaints

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In Japan, the decline in productivity has become a major social issue as the working-age population is decreasing owing to ultralow birthrate and

increasing aging population. Therefore, companies are taking a wide range of initiatives related to "health and productivity management" to keep their employees healthy and enhance their work performance. However, the actual health problems related to the poor work performance of Japanese employees and the manner in which they differ for men and women have not been identified thus far.

[A cross-sectional study](#) was conducted to analyze the relationship between 26 [health problems](#) and presenteeism using data from health examinations, stress checks, health insurance claims, and work performance of Japanese corporate employees (12,526 individuals aged 21–69 years) by gender. The study has been published in *Journal of Occupational & Environmental Medicine*.

The results demonstrated that nine health problems were related to poor work performance for both genders. Depressive symptoms were most strongly related for men and women, followed by indefinite complaints as lack of appetite, insufficient sleep, and heart palpitations or shortness of breath.

Additionally, for men, 14 health problems were related to work performance, including [mental illness](#) and other indefinite complaints. The relationship between health problems and poor work performance was stronger for men than for women.

These findings suggest that using stress checks to improve the mental health, indefinite complaints, and sleep of employees in companies is an effective health support measure to enhance [work performance](#).

Additionally, as priority support for men, we must focus on improving the psychosocial environment in the workplace by addressing various issues including long working hours, work overload, and conflicts in interpersonal relationships in the workplace.

More information: Sakiko Ozawa et al, Health problems related to presenteeism among Japanese employees, *Journal of Occupational & Environmental Medicine* (2023). [DOI: 10.1097/JOM.0000000000002985](https://doi.org/10.1097/JOM.0000000000002985)

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