

Insomnia leads to decreased empathy in health care workers

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A new study suggests that insomnia decreases empathy in health care workers and may lead to adverse clinical outcomes and medical errors.

Results show that subjects with an Insomnia Severity Index ISI of greater than 8, scored significantly higher across all four subscales of empathy.

"Insomnia affects empathy in [health care workers](#) which can lead to adverse clinical outcomes," said lead author Venkatesh Basappa Krishnamurthy, MD, assistant professor, Sleep Research and Treatment Center, department of psychiatry, Penn State College of Medicine in Hershey, Pa.

The research abstract was published recently in an online supplement of the journal *Sleep* and was presented Monday, June 8, in Seattle, Washington, at SLEEP 2015, the 29th annual meeting of the Associated Professional Sleep Societies LLC.

According to the American Academy of Sleep Medicine, [chronic insomnia](#), which affects as many as 10 percent of adults, involves ongoing difficulty falling asleep or staying asleep - or regularly waking up earlier than desired - despite an adequate opportunity for sleep.

The study group comprised 97 subjects including but not limited to physicians, residents, nurses, nurse assistants, pharmacists, radiology technicians, lab technicians were recruited from Henry Ford Health System. Empathy was measured by the Interpersonal Reactivity Index (IRI) across four subscales - fantasy, perspective-taking, empathic concern, and personal distress. Insomnia was measured using the Insomnia Severity Index (ISI).

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