

Rising number of workers are short on sleep, especially in health care, study shows

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More than a third of workers in the United States report consistently not getting enough sleep, according to a new study. And the trend is especially prevalent among health care workers, researchers found.

The study looked at self-reports from 150,000 working adults in various fields from 2010 to 2018.

According to the report, the odds of short sleep was significantly higher in 2018. The amount of workers who slept fewer than seven hours a night increased from 30.9% in 2010 to 35.6% in 2018.

While the trend of inadequate sleep—measured as less than seven hours a night—was on the rise overall, it was especially prevalent among workers in the fields of [health](#) care and law enforcement, the study found.

In 2018, 50% of workers in protective service and military professions reported being short on sleep, as compared to 45% of [health care workers](#), and 41% of professionals in transportation and material moving industries.

Although the exact reason for the link between certain fields and [sleep deprivation](#) is unknown, researchers say they believe those in high-stress industries are more likely to bring that stress home with them, which affects sleep.

"If you are a [police officer](#) who just had a shooting encounter, it's hard for the brain to feel rested, and if that state is not achieved you don't sleep," researcher Jagdish Khubchandani said in an interview with NPR.

Researchers say adults who don't get enough sleep have an increased risk of physical and mental health problems. Khubchandani said adults who get fewer than seven to nine hours of sleep are at a greater risk for obesity, heart disease, diabetes and anxiety.

"We're a very engaged 24-7 society and one of the first activities that gets curtailed is our sleep and many people are just not devoting enough time to sleep at nighttime," clinical psychologist Todd Arnedt told NPR.

To get a better night of rest, researcher Khubchandani advises certain lifestyle changes. He says things like a [healthy diet](#), exercise and meditation can all help. Although, he added, the onus falls not only on the employees, but also on employers.

He said addressing stress in the workplace can help ensure workers are getting better sleep.

"Employers that are willing to help employees develop adequate sleep times may increase the probability of workplace productivity, reduction in employee health care costs, and improving workplace safety and health," the researchers wrote.

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