



Is sleep impacting your workplace?

Over the course of the past decade, health and wellbeing practices in the workplace have become the norm. Whether it be work/life balance initiatives, group exercise programs or mindfulness practices, it's a pleasing development as organisations look to improve the welfare of their employees.

However, one important wellbeing factor is yet to be addressed by most organisations, but it plays a significant role in the wellness and productivity of our employees. That critical wellbeing element? Sleep.

A lack of effective sleep over time can lead to fatigue, which puts significant strain on individuals, families, and of course, workplaces. Causing significant physical, cognitive and emotional strain, sleep not only impairs an individual's health, but also has a direct effect on their ability to perform effectively in their role, with impacts including:

- Impaired work performance through a reduced ability to concentrate and avoid distractions, think laterally and analytically, make decisions and maintain vigilance;
- Reduced capacity to appreciate complex situations, recognise risks, coordinate hand-eye movements and communicate effectively; and
- Increased error rates, slower reaction times and more absenteeism.

In fact, the Deloitte Access Economics health survey – released in August this year – found that four in 10 Australians go to work each day without getting enough sleep.

While it may seem harmless enough, this research showed that sleep deprivation costs the economy an estimated \$66.3 billion in health bills, lost productivity and wellbeing in the 2016/17 period. Productivity losses alone are estimated to cost the economy \$17.9 billion, or \$2418 per person.

With that in mind, it's never been more important for organisations to focus on the importance of sleep, by educating employees on what good sleep practices are in wellness programs. Employers should take proactive steps to begin addressing employee fatigue, by educating them on healthy sleep practices.

While sleep and rest are the usual ways that individuals recover from the demands that cause fatigue, this restorative process is often compromised due to work demands and the ever increasing presence of technology in our day to day lives, so organisations need to encourage their employees make these proactive steps forward to positively affect their wellbeing. Just as we applaud people in our communities who are fit and eat well, as a society, we need to begin applauding those who sleep well, as it plays an equally important role in our wellbeing.

Aon provides assistance to organisations looking to promote a good sleep culture. If you would like more information on the sleep education and promotional programs that can form part of your overall employee wellness strategy, please contact us.

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