

Nurses have an increased risk of sleep disorders and sleep deprivation

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According to preliminary results of a new study, there is a high prevalence of insufficient sleep and symptoms of common sleep disorders among medical center nurses.

Results show that 49% of participating nurses at an academic medical center averaged less than 7 [hours of sleep](#) per night, and the overall average nightly sleep time was 6.6 hours. Symptoms consistent with chronic insomnia were identified in 31% of nurses, and [excessive daytime sleepiness](#) was found in 4.5% of them. Twenty-seven percent of nurses used medications to help them sleep, and 13% reported using medications to stay awake. Symptoms indicative of shift work disorder were present in 31% of nurses. About 18.5% of nurses also had a moderate-to-severe risk for [obstructive sleep apnea](#).

"We were surprised by the number of nurses potentially suffering from common sleep [disorders](#), most notably, chronic insomnia and shift work disorder," said lead author Francis Christian, M.D., a second-year fellow at the University of Oklahoma Health Sciences Center in Oklahoma City.

The American Academy of Sleep Medicine [recommends](#) that adults should sleep 7 or more hours per night on a regular basis to promote optimal health. According to the authors, nearly 100,000 deaths are estimated to occur each year in U.S. hospitals due to medical errors, and sleep deprivation and sleep disorders are significant contributors to this risk.

The study involved an [online survey](#) of 1,165 nurses at a tertiary care medical center. Questions asked about topics such as their sleep schedule and medications. Questionnaires such as the STOP-BANG and Epworth Sleepiness Scale were used to assess the nurses for sleep disorder symptoms.

"Nurses are at increased risk for circadian rhythm sleep-wake disorders such as shift work disorder," said Christian. "Recognition needs to take place so that we can screen appropriately and make scheduling modifications to help alleviate the burden of shift work disorder among nurses."

The research abstract was published recently in an online supplement of the journal *Sleep* and will be presented Monday, June 10, in San Antonio at SLEEP 2019, the 33rd annual meeting of the Associated Professional Sleep Societies LLC (APSS), which is a joint venture of the American Academy of Sleep Medicine and the Sleep Research Society.

More information: Francis Christian et al. 0630 Sleep Health of Nursing Staff in an Academic Medical Center: Results of a Survey Study, *Sleep* (2019). [DOI: 10.1093/sleep/zsz067.628](https://doi.org/10.1093/sleep/zsz067.628)

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