

Troubles paying rent or being forced to move linked to lower levels of sleep

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People who are unable to make their rent or mortgage payments sleep less than their peers who don't have such problems, and those who are forced to move because of financial problems sleep even less, according to a new RAND Corporation study.

The study, which followed 1,046 people receiving welfare in California over several years, is the first to analyze the relationship between [housing insecurity](#) and sleep outcomes after controlling for sleep duration and sleep quality measured prior to experiences with [housing insecurity](#).

The study found that people who were unable to make a rent or mortgage [payment](#) slept on average 22 fewer minutes a night than their peers who were able to make their rent or mortgage payments.

People who were forced to move because they could not make their rent or mortgage payments slept on average 32 fewer minutes a night than their peers who were not forced to move. The findings are published online by the journal *Sleep*.

"This is the first study that demonstrates that housing insecurity represents a distinct impediment to healthy sleep duration and quality," said Robert Bozick, the study's lead author and an adjunct researcher at RAND, a nonprofit research organization. "The stability and condition of one's home environment are critically important for health and well-being."

The study analyzed information from the California Socioeconomic Survey, a [longitudinal study](#) conducted by RAND of participants in the state's welfare program, which is called CalWORKs.

The survey follows a random sample of 1,657 adults drawn from a population of 15,600 economically disadvantaged families who first enrolled in CalWORKs between 2011 and 2014 in one of six diverse counties: Alameda, Fresno, Los Angeles, Riverside, Sacramento and Stanislaus.

The new RAND study used information from a sample of 1,046 participants who participated in surveys during 2015-16 and 2017-18, and who answered questions about [sleep duration](#), sleep quality and housing insecurity.

The reductions in sleep quality detailed by the study were small to moderate by conventional standards, but researchers say that sleep is cumulative such that slight reductions accrue over time. This accumulation in turn can create more pronounced sleep deficits.

"Considering the downstream health implications of housing insecurity is particularly timely given the economic fall-out from the coronavirus pandemic," said Bozick, who is a senior fellow at the Kinder Institute for Urban Research at Rice University. "National surveys show many Americans are having trouble making their housing payments, which may lead to greater reliance on social safety net programs like welfare in the near future."

More information: Robert Bozick et al. Housing insecurity and sleep among welfare recipients in California, *Sleep* (2021). DOI: [10.1093/sleep/zsab005](https://doi.org/10.1093/sleep/zsab005)

Provided by RAND Corporation

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