

Sleep disorders and among night shift health workers: A cross-sectional study in eastern province hospitals, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, 2016

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Shift workers, people who work outside workday hours, are known to be at risk of decreased alertness and productivity; hence increasing the possibility of occupational errors occurring. Hospital environment requires health professionals to be available at all times, which forces the health workers to take on night shift. Thus, health care workers are susceptible to occupation related sleep disorders. The aim of this study was to evaluate and assess the quality and duration of sleep among night shift health workers at the eastern province hospitals. A cross-sectional study was carried out among health workers working in 8-10 hour shifts at eastern province hospitals. A pre-tested, structured online questionnaire was distributed in the hospitals, with a total of 252 responses. The online questionnaire assessed and compared the difference between the sleep qualities of the workers while working during the night shift and while taking

days off. While working through night shifts, the respondents replied that they had problems falling and staying asleep (76% and 72.2%, respectively). Also, they suffered from an overall poor quality of sleep (59.8%) and decreased mental function (64.9%) while awake. Interestingly, the same respondents reported that during their days off, their occupation-related sleep disorders improved. However, more than half of the respondents noted that they faced difficulties falling asleep, which demonstrates the potent effect of night shift working on health professionals. This study concluded that sleep disorders are prominent within night shift health workers which affected their overall performance at work. We thereby recommend that such health workers follow up with sleep specialists to improve their overall quality of sleep.

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