



Research Review

Research review keeps you up to date with the latest peer-reviewed work on health and productivity. Here's a sample of what caught our attention in December 2019.

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Those working long hours (>40 hours) and who had long commutes (>5 hours) per week were less likely to report physical activity and more likely to report sleep problems. In light of the health and productivity benefits for both sleep and physical activity, employers may consider ways to help employees manage their time in ways that allow them to obtain better sleep and greater physical activity.

Commuting Time to Work and Behaviour-Related Health: A Fixed-Effect Analysis
[Occupational and Environmental Medicine](#)

Risk of developing cardiovascular disease (CVD) is found to be higher in adults with low educational attainment. Among men with low educational attainment, income and job strain explained half of the higher risk of mortality from CVD.

Contribution of Income and Job Strain to the Association Between Education and Cardiovascular Disease in 1.6 Million Danish Employees
[European Heart Journal](#)



Three predictors were found to be significant for lower back pain sick leave with 180 day follow up: catastrophizing, musculoskeletal work load and disability. Diagnosis of low back pain was not significantly associated with lower back pain sick leave after 180 days, nor was duration of sick leave at baseline.

Development of Prediction Model for the Prognosis of Sick Leave Due to Low Back Pain
[JOEM](#)

Among adults reporting lower back pain or neck and shoulder pain, decreased risk in work disability were associated with sex, age, education, mental health, perceived health, low job demands and high job control. In addition, better mental health scores and high job control was associated with a lower risk of unemployment.

Health, Work and Demographic Factors Associated with a Lower Risk of Work Disability and Unemployment in Employees with Lower Back, Neck and Shoulder Pain
[BMC Musculoskeletal Disorders](#)

Lower employee psychological distress was associated with high scores in people-oriented culture (the extent to which employees are involved in decision making, and trust and open communication between employees and employers) and social support, and lower scores in job demands. In addition, higher mental health expenditures were associated with lower scores in people-oriented culture and co-worker support.

Organizational and Psychosocial Working Conditions and Their Relationship With Mental Health Outcomes in Patient-Care Workers
[JOEM](#)

In 2030, approximately 80% of the US population is predicted to be overweight or obese, variable by state, sex, race/ethnicity and annual household income. Considering the well known consequences of high obesity on employers, employers may consider how they can help support their employees manage their weight.

Projected U.S. State-Level Prevalence of Adult Obesity and Severe Obesity
[NEJM](#)



Employees with lower SES status have a high risk of sleep loss, and are less likely to use strategies to manage sleepiness (ie air ventilation, lighting, noise management, furniture and room temperature). Employers may wish to consider such strategies to improve

alertness in workers.

Sociodemographic and Job Characteristics Influence Environmental Strategies Used to Manage Workplace Sleepiness

[JOEM](#)

Individuals residing in rural areas often have poorer health outcomes than their urban counterparts, mostly due to low provider availability and access in rural areas. Employers hiring in rural communities may consider strategies to improve health access for their employees.

Structural Urbanism Contributes To Poorer Health Outcomes For Rural America

[Health Affairs](#)

Many studies have looked at the results of workplace programs on weight loss and have found significant losses. However, after the end of the program, much of that loss is negated as individuals put weight back on. This study shows that after re-engagement, net weight loss is significant across men and women.

The Efficacy of Re-Engaging in an Employer Sponsored Weight Loss Program

[JOEM](#)

Adopting one new health behavior (adequate physical activity, healthy eating, tobacco abstinence, limited alcohol consumption, adequate sleep, healthy thinking) could reduce the population burden of disease by more than 7%. Activities associated with the lowest burden of disease were tobacco abstinence, adequate physical activity and adequate sleep.

The Predicted Impact of Adopting Health-Promoting Behaviors on Disease Burden in a Commercially Insured Population

[JOEM](#)

Categories of exposure to the physical work environment (chemicals, air quality, hazardous manual tasks, thermal discomfort, poor lighting and workplace noise) are found to be significantly associated with categories of

sleep based on chronotype (larks, owls) and type (typical, insufficient). Owls and insufficient sleepers have greater exposure to poor physical work environments, which may result in poor health outcomes, reductions in productivity, and increased risk of accidents.

The Physical Work Environment and Sleep: A Latent Class Analysis
[JOEM](#)

This study finds that employees' job strain at work impacts the safety of commuting behaviors outside the work place. Employers may wish to consider how on the job stress results in higher risk of accidents for their employees commuting home.

**When Work is Your Passenger: Understanding the Relationship
Between Work and Commuting Safety Behaviors**
[Journal of Occupational Health Psychology](#)

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