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Reducing Work-Family Conflicts in the Workplace Helps People to Sleep Better **According to New Report in the Inaugural Issue of *Sleep Health***

New York, NY, January 26, 2015 — A multi-institution team of sleep researchers recently found that workers who participated in an intervention aimed at reducing conflict between work and familial responsibilities slept an hour more each week and reported greater sleep sufficiency than those who did not participate in the intervention. Their study is published in [Sleep Health](#), Journal of the National Sleep Foundation.

"Increasing family-supportive supervision and employee control over work time benefited the sleep of hundreds of employees, and even greater effects may be possible if sleep is overtly addressed in workplace interventions," explained lead author Ryan Olson, PhD, of Oregon Health & Science University. "The Work, Family, and Health Network Study intervention was designed to reduce work-family conflict. It did not directly address sleep, yet sleep benefits were observed."

The invention focused on the U.S. employees of an information technology firm. Groups of randomly selected managers and employees participated in a three-month, social and organizational change process that included interactive sessions with facilitated discussions, role-playing, and games. Managers were also trained in family supportive supervision and self-monitored how they applied the training on the job. Data were collected through qualitative interviews 12 months after the intervention was introduced and by actigraphy, the measurement of individuals' sleeping and waking patterns using a monitor attached to participants' wrists. Actigraphy measures of sleep quality and quantity were taken at the beginning of the intervention, to establish baseline measures for participants, and 12 months after the intervention. Each of the 474 participants' activity recordings were evaluated by two scorers, who identified periods of sleep relative to each participant's waking activities.

"I applaud the methodological rigor of Olson and colleagues' approach to assessing the [Work, Family, and Health Network](#) Study's effect on the sleep duration and quality of a real world population," commented Dr. Lauren Hale, Editor-in-Chief of *Sleep Health*. "This study demonstrates that interventions unrelated to sleep can improve sleep in the population. Furthermore, these findings serve as a reminder that there are opportunities to deploy innovative interventions to improve sleep."

The authors had hypothesized that both sleep duration and insomnia would be improved in the study's twelfth month; secondarily, they hypothesized that any improvement in sleep quality and duration would be mediated by employees' enhanced control over their work time and reduced work-family conflict assessed at the sixth month after baseline. Researchers created a statistical mediation model that accounted for the multiple temporal aspects of actigraphic sleep data and participant characteristics.

“Here we showed that an intervention focused on changing the workplace culture could increase the measured amount of sleep employees obtain, as well as their perception that their sleep was more sufficient,” noted lead investigator [Orfeu M. Buxton, PhD](#), Pennsylvania State University (with secondary appointments at Harvard and Brigham and Women’s Hospital). “Work can be a calling and inspirational, as well as a paycheck, but work should not be detrimental to health. It is possible to mitigate some of the deleterious effects of work by reducing work-family conflict, and improving sleep.”

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NOTES FOR EDITORS

“[A workplace intervention improves sleep: Results from the randomized controlled Work, Family, and Health Study](#),” by Ryan Olson, PhD, Tori L. Crain, MS, Todd E. Bodner, PhD, Rosalind King, PhD, Leslie B. Hammer, PhD, Laura Cousino Klein, PhD, Leslie Erickson, BA, Phyllis Moen, PhD, Lisa F. Berkman, PhD, and Orfeu M. Buxton, PhD. It is published in *Sleep Health*, Volume 1, Issue 1 (January 2015), DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.sleh.2014.11.003>. It is openly available.

Full text of the article is available to credentialed journalists upon request; contact Anna Duggan at +1 720-726-5440 or nsfmedia@sleepfoundation.org. Journalists wishing to interview the authors should contact Orfeu Buxton, at 814-867-5707 or Orfeu@PSU.edu or Tori Indivero, Penn State Research Communications, at 814-865-9481 or vmi1@psu.edu.

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