



Fatigue prevention & optimal performance through:
Assessment | Training | Online learning
Website: www.thirdpillarofhealth.com. Telephone: 0845 686 0022.

THIRD PILLAR OF HEALTH FATIGUE INFORMATION SHEET

Sleep surveys have revealed that we are now sleeping considerably less than we did even a few years ago. The number of people now sleeping less than 6 hours a night (the fatigue danger zone) has increased markedly. The problem is that fatigued people when asked to self-assess believe that their performance is not impaired. Objective studies however show us that this is not the case.

"Managing your energy is more important than managing your time."
A. G. Lafley, CEO Procter & Gamble

CAUSES OF FATIGUE

It is becoming increasingly obvious that fatigue is one of the greatest threats to health and productivity in modern times. The fact is that we are sleeping much less than we did even a few years ago. America's National Sleep Foundation found that in the 6 years between 1999 and 2005 the number of people getting the recommended 8 hours of sleep a night fell from 35% of the population to 26%. Of more concern is the rise in those sleeping less than 6 hours a night which rose from 12% to 16% of the population.

In the UK a GMTV poll in 2006 revealed that only 19% of us get 8 hours of sleep a night and that in the South East 42% of people are getting less than 5 hours of sleep. As we will show below this has potentially devastating effects on health, safety and productivity.

When you consider the reduced sleep durations recent research from the Sleep Council makes for even more concerning reading. Apparently ½ of us are regularly woken about six times a night by our partners and that ¼ of us are snorers and may be depriving our partners of up to 2 hours of sleep each night. When we consider the latter points, even when we get the recommended amount of sleep, constant sleep disruption will have serious effects on our night time sleep and mean that we do not derive the full benefits we should be from a night's sleep.

Furthermore, fatigue is a real area of concern for new parents. Mother & Baby magazine surveyed 3,000 mothers and found that the average length of sleep for new mothers is 3.5 hours a night for the first 4 months and this only rises to 5 hours a night between 4 months and 18 months. A recent study by Actimel and Top Sante found that 75% of (all) women in their thirties are lucky to get 6 hours of sleep a night.

Not only are we sleeping much less but Britons also work the longest hours in Europe, averaging 42.4 hours a week (Eurostat) versus the European average of 40.5 hours. A UN report also found that 24.7% of Brits work longer than 48 hours a week. However Britain lags the rest of the developed world in terms of productivity. According to the LSE output per worker in the UK is 13% lower than Germany, 18% lower than the US and 20% lower than France.

Consider also the Boots results from a survey of 4,000 office workers showing that 90% of UK workers turn up to work hung over 'at least once a week' and we have a recipe for fatigue and performance disaster!

THE EFFECTS

The effects of fatigue can be devastating to our productivity, health and overall feeling of wellbeing. According to GP Keith Hopcroft as many as 1 in 3 patients complain of feeling tired all the time (TATT). Sleep council research also found that 6 in 10 thirty-somethings describe themselves as usually 'very tired or shattered' when they go to bed. Their research also revealed that more than half of us regularly feel so tired at work that we would rather go home and 1 in 8 feel this way 3 or 4



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times a week. The Actimel study also found that 75% of women in their thirties frequently feel tired and of those 59% feel tired all the time.

The Harvard Business Review found that sleeping 4 or 5 hours a night impairs performance equivalent to a blood alcohol level of 0.1% (the UK drink drive limit is 0.08%). When the University of Pennsylvania tested three groups of people over 2 weeks by the 14th day those who slept only 4 hours each night were 14x more likely to make an error than well rested and 6-hour sleepers were 11x more likely to make errors in memory tests.

An Occupational & Environmental Medicine study of 1,300 doctors revealed that 66% of doctors admit to having made a mistake at some point because they were tired – 40% in the last six months. In standard tests 1/3 were classed as sleepy – this rose to 57% in emergency medicine, 40% in anaesthetics and 38% in intensive care.

The effects of fatigue are significant in terms of lost productivity. According to Quaker Oats study the average Brit is not fully alert until 09:57am – a whole hour (or more) of lost working time. Cranfield Management School found that companies waste up to 520 hours per employee per year failing to manage their energy correctly. This figure is very close to findings from the Boots survey which revealed that on average we waste 151 minutes per employee per day in lost productivity.

Our working culture doesn't help with the amount we sleep. A Samaritans survey revealed that 1 in 3 people are so wound up by their jobs that they cannot sleep properly, 5 million are extremely stressed by their work and ½ million people say work-related stress made them physically sick. Circadian technologies (in 2003) found that job performance can decrease by as much as 25% when workers put in 60 or more hours a week for prolonged periods and for those working 12 hours a day the risk of illness increases by 37%.

HEALTH CONSEQUENCES

It is not just our productivity that suffers from poor sleep, sleeping less than 6 hours a night can lead to serious health issues. Laval University (Quebec) found that those who sleep less than 6 hours a night are 27% more likely to become obese. This correlates closely to findings in the US government's National Health & Examination survey of 18,000 people showing that those who slept less than 6 hours were 23% more likely to be obese (compared to those who slept between 7 and 8 hours). This rose to 50% for those who slept less than 5 hours a night and 73% for those who slept less than 4 hours a night.

A UCL and Warwick study into 10,308 British Civil servants also showed that the risk of dying of heart disease doubles amongst people who cut the hours they sleep from 7 hours to 5 hours and the same increase in risk applies to those under 50 who are stressed by their work.

Boston School of Medicine also found that those who sleep less than 5 hours a night are 2.5x more likely to develop diabetes against those who sleep 7 to 8 hours a night.

COUNTING THE COSTS

175 million days are lost due to sickness absence in the UK every year at a total cost of c. £100bn. Stress accounts for 13 million days lost at a cost of £13bn per annum (CIPD & Health, Work & Wellbeing). According to Dame Carol Black's recent Health, Work & Wellbeing review presenteeism also costs UK business c. £15 billion per annum.



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According to the CIPD (2007 Absence Management Survey) stress is the leading cause of long-term absence and 41.5% of companies cite stress as a top-5 cause of short term absence. The charity Mind says stress costs £1 for every £10 generated and in the same review Lord Layard suggests that there is £3,000 productivity gain for every £1,000 spent on preventing anxiety and depression.

The average cost of recruiting someone to fill a vacancy is £4,333 and total costs rise to £7,750 (CIPD) where other costs such as training are incorporated. When we consider the national average turnover rate is 18% this becomes a very significant cost to control.

The IHPM Health at Work survey also found that health promotion programmes return £3.73 in work performance gains for every £1 invested. The Health, Work & Wellbeing survey in 2006 concluded that health promotion measures led to a 12 to 36% reduction in sickness and a saving of 34% in absenteeism costs. At Third Pillar of Health we believe the returns we can generate are better than these figures.

THE GOOD NEWS

The good news is that it doesn't have to be like this. At Third Pillar of Health we have designed a full product and service suite to help your people reduce fatigue and maintain optimum performance throughout the day.

Our Fatigue Assessment will give you an accurate understanding of the propensity for fatigue within your organisation. Our Seminar will help your people understand how to get the most out of their night's sleep and give them sufficient understanding of some of the basic science of sleep to tailor their night time routines to maximise the benefits they should be deriving from a full night of sleep.

We have also developed a new online learning tool that incorporates the assessment and training. Each individual receives their own report highlighting areas of most concern whilst the organisation receives a composite report looking at fatigue levels across the group.

We will also work with you where necessary to introduce control environments such that your staff can maintain their optimal performance throughout the day.

All our products and services have been designed to help your organisation tackle fatigue and perform at optimal levels throughout the day. We will be delighted to assist you with any aspect and we always aim to exceed expectation.

For more information on any of our services please do not hesitate to contact us:

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