

What aspects of shift work cause most problems and are most prevalent – a national representative sample

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Conclusion:

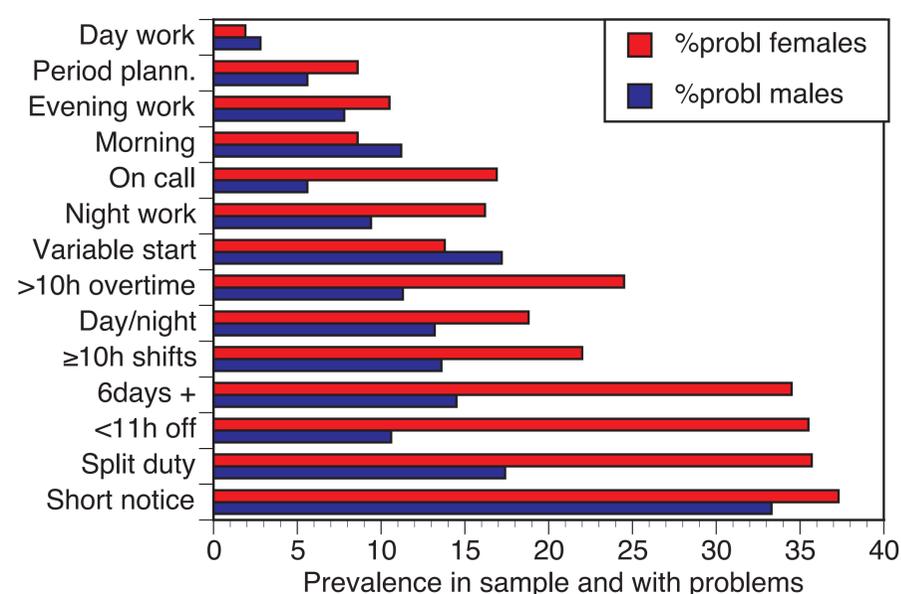
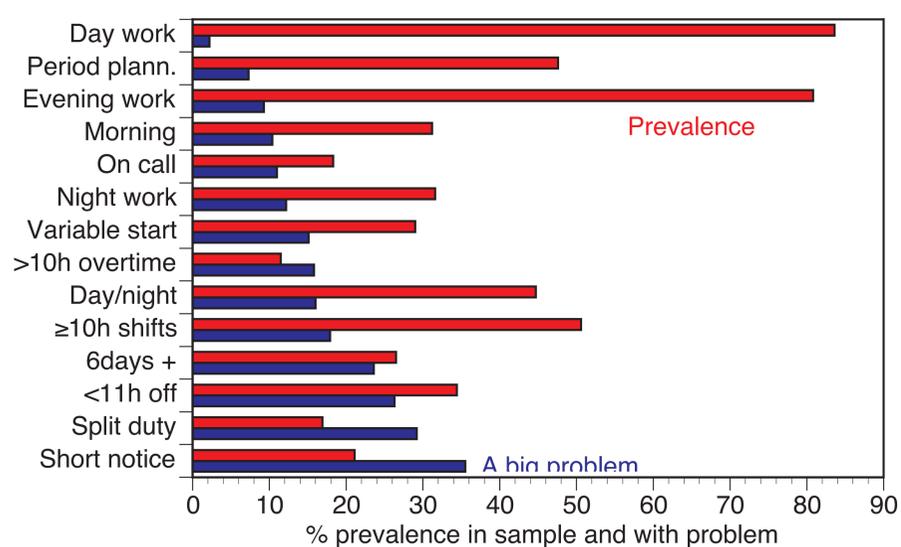
Short forward planning, split duty, and short time off between shifts were the main factors constituting work hour problems. Night work or morning work appears to be of less widespread importance. This needs to be considered in future research on shift work.

Background

Night work dominates the view of the shift work problems, but there are other aspects that may be important. The problem areas of shift work is not a topic that should be investigated in a particular company since work load, environmental influences and local culture may affect the results. The purpose of the present study was to obtain a national representative impression of the problems in shift work.

Results

The results showed that the following work hour aspects constituted a big problem - among those exposed to it. Short forward planning of work hours, Split duty, <11h off between shift, ≥10h shifts. Women had a much higher problem prevalence for split duty, <11h off, >10h overtime, and on call. White-collar workers had a higher prevalence for the same work hour aspects than blue collar workers. In addition, 33% of the sample thought their work hours disturbed sleep, 46% thought they caused fatigue, 28% a health risk, and 17% an accident risk. Logistic regression analyses showed a close relationship between work hour problems and the health indicators.



Methods

The questions were of the type: “do you have night work (at least 4h between 2400h and 0600h) at least once a month”. The response was yes/no and a “no” was followed up with: “Is this a big problem for you” – yes/no (see results for other questions). In addition, questions on sleep problems, fatigue, health, and risk were included. A sample of 16000 individuals in the regular labor market survey interviews were asked if they had work hours outside of day work. Those who responded “yes” were asked if they would respond to a short questionnaire on work hours. The response rate to the questionnaire was 81%. For the shift workers.