

Insomnia: How Many of Your Employees Are Affected?

More than 70 million people in the United States display 1 or more symptoms of insomnia.^{1,2}

Insomnia is defined as not being satisfied with sleep quality or quantity, associated with 1 or more of the following symptoms³:

- Difficulty falling asleep
- Difficulty staying asleep, or frequently waking up during the night
- Waking early in the morning with difficulty falling back asleep

To be diagnosed with insomnia, sleep difficulties must interfere with one or more areas of the person's life (eg, occupational function, etc), occur at least 3 nights per week, and persist for at least 3 months.³

Approximately 23.5 million people have symptoms consistent with the diagnosis of insomnia,^{1,4} and about 8 million are prescribed a medication.^{1,5}

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Sleep is 1 of the 3 pillars of health as defined by the Institute for Health and Productivity Management.⁶ Addressing insomnia is key to ensuring sleep health for all of your employees.

Although employers list health as a top concern, only 23% of small employers and 32% of large employers* offer programs to treat sleep disorders.⁷ **There is an unmet need to address sleep health and associated insomnia through employer promotion.**

*Small employers were defined as those with <500 employees, and large employers were those with ≥500 employees.⁷



What Can You Do to Help Your Employees Suffering From Insomnia?

- Stress exposure and intensity contribute to insomnia.⁸ Employee stressors may include high workload, low support from coworkers and supervisors, and lack of employee control over work. Even if you can't decrease the workload, open communication to create a more productive work environment⁹
- Connect employees who may be suffering from insomnia to employee assistance programs (EAPs). Counselors in EAPs may be able to address insomnia through medical or behavioral treatments or provide additional resources to do so⁹

Additional Considerations for Employers

1. Review what each of your vendors (eg, health plan, pharmacy benefit manager, disease management/well-being, EAP, disability management) is doing with regard to insomnia to identify gaps and overlap.
2. Address gaps with vendors and determine accountable parties and processes.
3. Review medical/pharmacy plan formularies for potential barriers to treatments, technologies, and medicines.
4. Include sleep awareness education with health plans and other vendors, celebrate Sleep Awareness Week in March,¹⁰ and consider coordinating timing of campaigns with Daylight Savings Time.

References

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