

MEDIA RELEASE	PSA disturbed by reports of widespread sleep deprivation among the South African workforce, posing risks to their well-being
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The Public Servants Association (PSA) is concerned following the findings of a recent study revealing that nearly half of South Africa's workforce is suffering from chronic sleep deprivation. This alarming trend poses significant risks to both employee well-being and overall productivity.

The study highlights that sleep deprivation is not merely a personal health issue but a growing occupational hazard with serious economic consequences. Chronic fatigue among employees can lead to costly errors, reduced productivity, and increased safety risks in the workplace. Leading sleep experts emphasised that sleep is foundational to cognitive performance, memory, decision-making, and emotional regulation. The PSA echoes this sentiment and calls for immediate action to address the root causes of sleep deprivation in the workplace. The pressure to meet deadlines and targets, which is worsened by chronic staff shortages, as employers are obsessed with cutting costs is the major reason why the employees are forced to take work home. Productivity is prioritised over the wellness of the employees while a lack of sleep makes the same employees' error prone, and employers are quick to subject them to disciplinary processes, forgetting that they are the cause. Many health professionals and those within the security clusters are forced to work long hours owing to staff shortages and might even enjoy being paid overtime, however it is short-lived as sleep deprivation can cause amongst others, cardiovascular diseases, mental health disorders, immune system dysfunction, and cognitive impairment.

The PSA urges employers to recognise the importance of sleep health and to implement measures that promote better sleep hygiene among their staff. This includes creating a supportive work environment that encourages reasonable working hours, stress management, and the reduction of screen time before bed. Furthermore, the PSA calls on government and relevant stakeholders to prioritise sleep health as a critical component of occupational health and safety regulations. By doing so, they can mitigate the adverse effects of sleep deprivation on both employees and the economy. The same employees are denied time for themselves and their families thus not achieving the balanced life wheel which is unacceptable. The PSA remains committed to advocating for the well-being of public servants and the broader workforce.

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