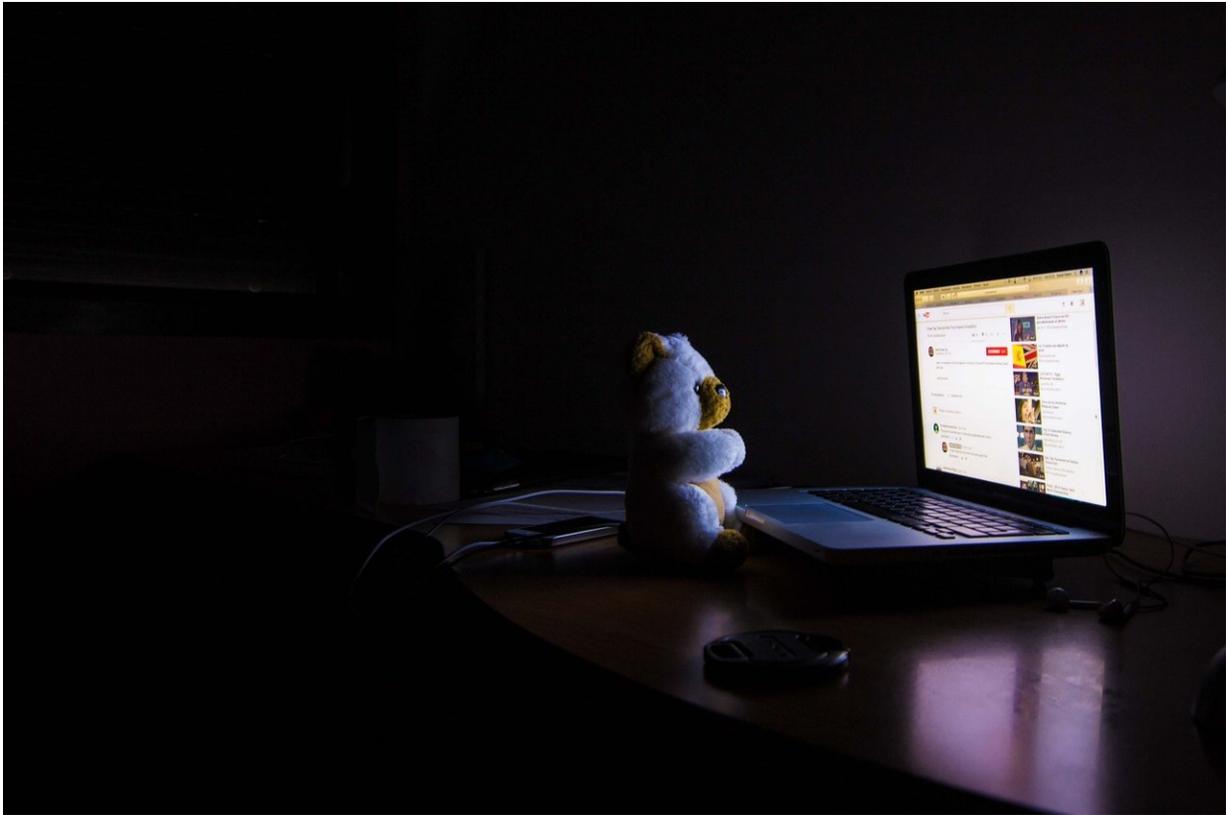


# Sleepless in Japan—How insomnia kills

February 9 2018

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Lay people tend to think that insomnia is usually a symptom of something else, like stress, a bad diet or a sedentary lifestyle, but this may not be true at all. It is possible that insomnia itself causes many of the conditions that it is seen as a symptom of. Using previous research that shows that insomnia causes a decrease in blood flow in the front

dorsal lobe of the brain, and correlates it with depression, the authors of a Japanese study recently published in De Gruyter's open access journal Open Medicine entitled 'Insomnia and depression: Japanese hospital workers questionnaire survey' seeks to establish a link between insomnia and depression.

Depression is a hidden killer. It is a condition that affects people all around the world. Suicide is one of the leading causes of death in Japan. The yearly financial cost to the Japanese economy of depression and suicide is estimated by UPI to be USD 4.1 billion. Middle-aged males, one of the groups that was found to suffer the highest rates of [insomnia](#) are also the likeliest to commit suicide.

In March of 2011, over 7000 hospital staff in ten hospitals in the district of Rosai were given a self-administered anonymous questionnaire. The questions included information about the respondent's gender, age, and [medical profession](#), as well as questions about their sleeping history two weeks prior to responding to the survey, as well as detailing their overtime work, and their history of disease and chronic pain. It also asked them to assess their own feelings of depression and fatigue.

The results were alarming. Thirteen percent of men, and nineteen percent of women suffered from insomnia, and the medical profession with the highest rate of insomnia were nurses at twenty percent. For comparison, about ten percent of Americans suffer from [chronic insomnia](#).

Chronic insomnia can lead to [depression](#), and a better understanding of the link between the two conditions could be used to improve treatment, and prevent the condition from worsening while strengthening the world economy. The hope is a survey will be developed for healthcare professionals (and other high-stress professions) that can identify insomnia before it becomes a problem.

**More information:** Fumihiko Koyama et al. Insomnia and depression: Japanese hospital workers questionnaire survey, *Open Medicine* (2017).  
[DOI: 10.1515/med-2017-0056](https://doi.org/10.1515/med-2017-0056)

Provided by De Gruyter

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