

Sleep deprivation can influence professional behavior

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Research by Professor of Management and Organizations Aleksander Ellis shows that a lack of sleep can cause deviant behavior on the job.

(Phys.org) -- In a recent paper, Aleksander Ellis of the University of Arizona Eller College of Management and a colleague demonstrate that lack of sleep can cause deviant behavior at work.

Early 2011 saw a spate of reports in the media about [air traffic controllers](#) sleeping on the job as a result of [sleep deprivation](#). The potential harm from this behavior is obvious, but what about the average office job? Can sleep deprivation cause counterproductive, or even unethical, behavior in organizations?

“Over the past decade, Americans have been getting less and less sleep, and estimates are that this trend will continue,” said Professor of Management and Organizations Aleksander Ellis, the Charles and Candice Nelson Fellow. “In fact, in certain industries, [lack of sleep](#) is

worn as a badge of honor.”

In a recent paper published in the *Academy of Management Journal*, Ellis and co-author Michael Christian of Kenan-Flagler Business School at the University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill demonstrate that lack of sleep can cause [deviant behavior](#).

In one part of the study, for instance, the researchers asked a group of subjects to respond to an email that contained colloquial language and misspellings. One of the sleep-deprived subjects responded with an unprofessional, personal attack. This is just one example Ellis and Christian cite to demonstrate how sleep deprivation reduces self-control and increases hostility.

Ellis and Christian are currently working on a parallel project that examines how [sleep](#) deprivation affects the tendency of individuals to behave unethically by conforming to the behavior of unethical authority figures.

More information: journals.aomonline.org/amj/

Provided by University of Arizona

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