

Study busts 9 to 5 model for academic work

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QUT's Professor Adrian Barnett led the research which examined more than 49,000 manuscript and 76,000 peer review online submissions to *The BMJ* and *The BMJ Open*, measuring whether the submissions were made on weekends, national holidays or late at night.

The study is published in the Christmas edition of the *BMJ*, which is a special issue of light-hearted studies of health.

"Clear and consistent differences were seen between countries," Professor Barnett said.

"Chinese researchers most often worked at weekends and after midnight, whereas researchers in Scandinavian countries, which have a greater focus on [work-life balance](#), were more likely to submit their papers during 9 to 5 on weekdays."

"The differences between countries suggest that a 'culture of overwork' is a literal thing, and not just a figure of speech," Professor Barnett said.

China, which is known to have a hard-working academic culture, was the notable leader on the table of weekend workers, both for submitting manuscripts and peer reviews to both journals in the study.

India, Denmark and Norway were the countries in which academics were least likely to work on weekends.

"Australian researchers were in the middle of the pack for most outcomes, and so were never the worst nor the best," Professor Barnett said.

Professor Barnett said there were limitations to the study.

More information: Adrian Barnett et al. Working 9 to 5, not the way to make an academic living: observational analysis of manuscript and peer review submissions over time, *BMJ* (2019). [DOI: 10.1136/bmj.l6460](https://doi.org/10.1136/bmj.l6460)

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