

Women managers report better sleep quality in countries with greater gender empowerment

March 17 2021



Woman in bed with laptop. Credit: Victoria Heath on Unsplash

A large cross-national survey of Europeans showed that managers were more likely than non-managers to report restless sleep. However, women managers reported better sleep quality in countries with greater gender

empowerment, while men managers reported better sleep in countries with stronger economies. Xiao Tan of the University of Melbourne, Australia, and colleagues present these findings in the open-access journal *PLOS ONE* on March 17, 2021.

Previous research has suggested that sleep quality is shaped by gender, work, and [family demands](#). People also appear to sleep better in countries with higher gender equality. However, it has been unclear how links between gender and sleep extend specifically to people in managerial roles, who may have more control over their jobs but may also face more workplace demands.

To better understand these links, Tan and colleagues analyzed data from a 2012 survey of 27,616 people aged 25 to 64 who were employed across 29 countries in Europe. Sleep quality was assessed by a question about how much sleep restlessness the participants had recently experienced. The analysis also considered each country's level of gender empowerment, measured according to the Gender Development Index, and [economic strength](#), measured by [gross domestic product](#) (GDP).

After controlling for socioeconomic factors and family demands, the researchers found that all workers were more likely to report restful sleep in countries with greater gender empowerment. Regardless of gender, managers reported worse sleep quality than non-managers. However, women managers slept better in countries with greater gender empowerment, while men managers slept better in higher-GDP countries.

While this study does not confirm causation, it suggests that women's sleep quality benefits from gender empowerment, while men's [sleep quality](#) benefits from economic development. These findings could help inform efforts to narrow the human development gap between genders.

More information: Tan X, Ruppanner L, Maume D, Hewitt B (2021) Do managers sleep well? The role of gender, gender empowerment and economic development. *PLoS ONE* 16(3): e0247515.

doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0247515

Provided by Public Library of Science

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