

MENTAL HEALTH:
A ground-breaking
new study has
been carried out
on the impacts of
the role.

Study now shows the effects of rotational working

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Whether on or offshore, the work and lifestyle of a remote rotational worker is unique. While lucrative for some, it has long been associated with a high impact on mental health and wellbeing.

To uncover some of the issues, and benefits, of this mode of working, the International SOS Foundation and Affinity Health at Work carried out a ground-breaking new study, "Mental Health and the Remote Rotational Worker".

The study brings together global findings from stakeholder

interviews, a survey of remote rotational workers and an extensive literature review. The findings highlight a high level of suicidal thoughts, clinical depression and impacts on physical health (such as diet), including:

- 40% of all respondents experienced suicidal thoughts on rotation some or all the time (compared to the average of 4-9% in the general population).
- 29% met the benchmark for clinical depression while on rotation.
- 52% reported a decline in mood and their mental health suffered while on rotation.

● 62% had worse mental health than would be the norm in a population.

Almost a quarter also said they experienced emotional exhaustion, or "burnout", on a weekly basis. This again compares negatively with the general population, where we would expect this in only 2-13% of the population.

On the flip side, the majority of respondents felt that their health and safety was prioritised.

They report a strong sense of community and support among co-workers and from managers. Respondents also reported feeling that

they could share their mental health concerns with colleagues, although 23% reported not having any access to structured emotional support if they needed it.

While organisations operating with remote rotational workers have become increasingly aware of the potential impacts on mental health, this is the first global study of its kind.

It reveals an urgent need for more understanding and increased strategies to mitigate this risk and promote better mental health.

For many organisations, this has become an

even greater urgency in the current Covid-19 environment, which has put increased pressure on this working format already recognised as having a high level of stress. It is also important to remember that this mental health (or ill health) can go hand-in-hand with physical health.

Following the findings of the study, the International SOS Foundation has designed a new virtual symposium.

The small group sessions enable stakeholders who have a duty of care to their rotational workforce to make evidence-based adjustments and

recommendations to their employees to protect and promote mental health for those remote workers on rotation. To register for forthcoming sessions and for a copy of the paper, go to international.sosfoundation.org/mental-health-and-the-remote-rotational-worker-symposium

■ For anyone interested in finding out more about how International SOS can support your organisation's health and wellbeing please contact Claire Westbrook-Keir, International SOS client relationships director: claire.westbrook@internationalsos.com

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