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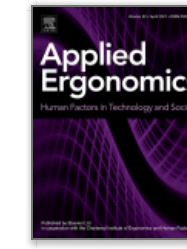
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## Outline

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Special issue paper

## The impact of shift and night work on health ☆

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## Abstract

Shift work, in particular night work, can have a negative impact on health and well-being of workers as it can cause: (a) disturbances of the normal circadian rhythms of the psychophysiological functions, beginning with the sleep/wake cycle; (b) interferences with work performance and efficiency over the 24 hour span, with consequent errors and accidents; (c) difficulties in maintaining the usual relationships both at family and social level, with consequent negative influences on marital relations, care of children and social contacts; (d) deterioration of health that can be manifested in disturbances of sleeping and eating habits and, in the long run, in more severe disorders that deal prevalently with the gastrointestinal (colitis, gastroduodenitis and peptic ulcer), neuro-psychic (chronic fatigue, anxiety, depression) and, probably, cardiovascular (hypertension, ischemic heart diseases) functions. Besides, shift and night work may have more specific adverse effects on women's health both in relation to their particular hormonal and reproductive function, and their family roles. It has been estimated that about 20% of all workers have to leave shift work in a very short time because of serious disturbances; those remaining in shift work show different levels of (mal)adaptation and (in)tolerance, that can become more or less manifest in different times, and with different intensity. In fact, the effects of such stress condition can vary widely among the shift workers in relation to many 'intervening variables' concerning both individual factors (e.g. age, personality traits, physiological characteristics), as well as working situations (e.g. work loads, shift schedules) and social conditions (e.g. number and age of children, housing, commuting).

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## Keywords

shiftwork; nightwork; occupational medicine; health impairment

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## Shiftwork

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