Letting Workers Nap on the Job Has Benefits, Says New Study

Fatigue can pose safety issues. But employers generally don't permit or want workers to sleep on the job, expecting them to get adequate sleep at home and on their own time.

However, a study from researchers at the University of Michigan found that taking a nap may be an effective strategy to counteract impulsive behaviour, boost tolerance for frustration, and improve workplace safety and production.

The study, which is available in the journal *Personality and Individual Differences*, examined how a brief nap affected adults' emotional control. The 40 participants, ages 18-50, maintained a consistent sleep schedule for three nights prior to the test.

In a lab, participants completed tasks on computers and answered questions about sleepiness, mood and impulsivity. Some were then randomly given a chance to take a 60-minute nap, while the others instead watched a nature video. Research assistants monitored the participants, who later completed those questionnaires and tasks again.

The researchers found that those participants who napped spent more time trying to solve a task than the non-nappers, who were less willing to endure frustration to complete it. In addition, nappers reported feeling less impulsive.

Combined with previous research on the negative effects of sleep deprivation, results from this study indicate that staying awake for an extended period of time hinders people from controlling negative emotional responses, said Jennifer Goldschmied, the study's lead author and a doctoral student in the Department of Psychology.

'Our results suggest that napping may be a beneficial intervention for

individuals who may be required to remain awake for long periods of time by enhancing the ability to persevere through difficult or frustrating tasks,' said Goldschmied.

In addition, napping may also be a cost-efficient and easy strategy to increase workplace safety, the researchers said. And employers who add nap pods in the workplace or offer extended break time may find that workers are more productive.

So consider implementing a fatigue risk management system in your workplace that includes permissible napping. You can use this fatigue hazards identification checklist to identify work-related factors that contribute to worker fatigue and adapt this model fatigue management policy. And display this infographic on worker fatigue to warn workers of the dangers of not getting enough sleep.