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Another all-nighter? You sure about that?

By Kristy Grant-Hart

We compliance officers are a dedicated bunch. There's a leadership meeting in Singapore at 4:00 a.m.? No problem. Training in Norway via webinar at 1:00 a.m. our time? We're there. Board meeting in Cape Town with a 12-hour turnaround to be home for the kid's piano recital? Already on the plane.

Commitment is part of what makes us successful, but when the cost of that is sleep deprivation, that tenacity can become toxic—both to our careers and health.

The science

Matt Walker's TED Talk, "Sleep is Your Superpower," has been viewed more than 17 million times.^[1] In it, he notes that the culture of hustle and grind and the "you can sleep when you're dead" mentality may be killing both productivity and people. A lack of sleep is destructive to cardiovascular health, reproductive health, the immune system, and long-term cognitive functioning.

Lack of sleep creates both short-term and long-term problems. In a study cited by Walker pitting a sleep-deprived group against a well-slept group, when both were assigned to learn a new set of facts, the sleep-deprived group had a 40 percent deficit in remembering them.

Shockingly, Walker noted, "The link between a lack of sleep and cancer is now so strong that the World Health Organization has classified any form of nighttime shift work as a probable carcinogen, because of a disruption of your sleep-wake rhythms."

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