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HEALTH RISKS OF SHIFT WORK FOR SERVICEMEN: PREVENTION AND REDUCTION STRATEGIES

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ABSTRACT

Shift work disrupts natural circadian rhythms, sleep-wake cycles, negatively impacting workers' psychosomatic health and overall quality of life.

Even in peaceful conditions, the nature of military service significantly differs from the daily routines and work activities of civilian population with a number of notable and significant features. Military service is always performed under stressful conditions, characterized by frequent deviations from standard work schedules, workloads and disruptions to normal daily rhythms, especially due to shift work. These stress factors have a negative effect on the working ability and health of servicemen. Moreover, this impact increases as the duration of military service extends. This situation is exacerbated among servicemen on combat duty due to constant stress and psychological strain.

Shift work is associated with sleep disturbances, depressive mood and anxiety, cognitive impairment, low quality of life and even suicidal thoughts, leading to increased safety risks. Shift work, sleep deprivation, and related fatigue endanger personal safety, task performance, and national security as well.

Shift work, sleep deprivation and daily rhythm disruptions lead to metabolic, cardiovascular, musculoskeletal system, mental, physical and functional cognitive disorders. Its impact on family and social life can result in psychological stress and psychosomatic disorders. Furthermore, it can negatively affect marital relations, fulfillment of parental responsibilities, and children's education.

Published articles provide considerably more data on the impacts of shift work on civilian workers than it does on servicemen.

Present study was conducted to demonstrate the detrimental effects of shift work on the psychosomatic health and life quality of workers with various professions, including military personnel. Various methods have been suggested to evaluate servicemen's suitability for work, to reduce professional errors, to ensure service safety and to mitigate the negative impact of shift work.

KEYWORDS: *military service, circadian rhythm, occupational health, occupational risk, relative risk of mortality, working schedule, shift work, rotating shift schedule, quality of life, health-related quality of life, work ability, job performance, healthy aging, depression, accident.*

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