



What Data Tells Us About Rest, Errors, and Attrition

Across APAC's always-on work culture, recovery is often overlooked. We tend to normalize long hours, cross-time-zone demands, and digital presenteeism. However, the data shows a clear trade-off: **reduced recovery leads directly to higher errors, safety risks, and attrition.**

Sleep is the body's primary recovery mechanism, and its absence has immediate cognitive consequences. Even moderate sleep deprivation reduces attention, slows reaction time, and impairs decision-making (Pilcher et al., 2020)¹. This translates into measurable business impact – research shows that after sleep loss, performance quality can drop significantly, with error rates rising sharply (Fucci et al., 2018)².

The implications extend beyond productivity into safety. Fatigue is a well-established contributor to workplace incidents: sleep-deprived employees are significantly more likely to be involved in accidents, and a meaningful share of workplace injuries is linked to sleep issues (Workplace Health Resource Center, 2018)³. In sectors critical to manufacturing, logistics, healthcare, IT, this elevates operational and regulatory risk.

Less visible, but equally important, is **leadership fatigue**. Sleep loss affects emotional regulation and judgment, increasing the likelihood of reactive decision-making and poor communication (Pilcher, et al., 2020)¹. This creates a multiplier effect: fatigued leaders unintentionally normalize overwork, embedding burnout into team norms.

Organizations often track absenteeism, but the larger cost lies in presenteeism – employees working while cognitively impaired. Fatigue-driven presenteeism reduces output quality, increases

rework, and contributes to disengagement (Workplace Health Resource Center, 2018). Over time, chronic lack of recovery leads to emotional exhaustion, making attrition a predictable outcome rather than a surprise.

The core issue is structural. Recovery is still treated as an individual responsibility, when in reality, it is shaped by how work is designed. For organizations competing globally, this is a critical blind spot.



The Cost of SKIPPING RECOVERY



Intervention Priorities for Organizations

To address fatigue systematically, leading organizations are shifting toward recovery-centric design:

01

Embed fatigue as a measurable risk

Track work hours, meeting load, and after-hours activity. Use these as leading indicators for errors and burnout.

Protect recovery windows

Introduce meeting-free blocks and enforce downtime across time zones to reduce continuous cognitive load. If the employee exceeds the number of working hours, issue a warning along with wellness interventions.

02

03

Redesign leadership norms

Encourage leaders to model sustainable behaviours - avoiding late night communication and signalling boundaries

Integrate sleep into wellbeing programs

Move beyond generic wellness to include sleep education, fatigue awareness, recovery tracking and using EAP services to cope with transitions, stress & other related issues that can be the cause of sleep deprivation.

04

05

Address workload, not just resilience

Focus on realistic deadlines, resource allocation, and workflow efficiency rather than expecting employees to "cope better."

3M's (Micro, Messo & Macro Breaks) - Employees should focus on micro (10 minute) & meso (1 to 2 hours) breaks through the day and week especially when workload increases & deadlines are around the corner. Macro-breaks (half or full day) can be taken after projects are completed, during downtime or even before taking on a promotion.

The evidence is consistent: fatigue increases errors, weakens decision-making, and accelerates attrition. Reframing recovery as a ****business-critical input - not a personal choice**** is essential for sustainable performance in all organizations.



Sonia Hillary

Consultant - Solution,
Innovation & Excellence,
Human Dynamic APAC

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