

# ***C*CHAPTER**

**16**

## ***Study on “Work from Home & it’s connection with Mental & Physical Health***

***<sup>1</sup>Navleen Kaur***

*<sup>1</sup>Student, IIHMR University*

***<sup>2</sup>Dr. (Col) Mahender Kumar***

*<sup>2</sup>Professor, IIHMR University*

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## **INTRODUCTION**

The global pandemic, triggered by the emergence of Covid-19 in 2019, led to an unprecedented crisis with widespread health implications and economic repercussions. The pivotal moment arrived in March 2020 when our government implemented a nationwide lockdown, prompting a shift to remote work. As we adapted to this new normal, our homes transformed into both workplaces and sanctuaries. This study aims to explore the substantial changes in the working environment and their impact on individuals' health. The research question driving this investigation is, "What is the correlation between Work from Home (WFH) and mental and physical health issues? [1]

With homes now serving as workplaces and relaxation spaces, the primary objective is to delve into the repercussions of WFH on overall physical and mental well-being. The study aims to understand how employees reacted to the shifts in their work environment and to discuss both the negative and positive effects of full-time remote work during the unavoidable Covid-19 pandemic [2].

While telecommuting offers numerous advantages, such as improved work-life integration, increased family time, cost-effectiveness, and heightened productivity, the new work culture has blurred the boundaries between professional and personal life. This blurring, coupled with extended working hours and limited organizational support, can adversely affect individuals' mental and physical health. The investigation addresses the complexity of the WFH culture, emphasizing the need for a structured examination to recognize the impact of environmental,

physical, and psychosocial factors on an individual's overall well-being [3].

Given that organizations are leaning towards and may continue the WFH culture, there is a pressing need to gather evidence and formulate guidelines and policies to safeguard employees' health. Consequently, this research study undertakes a rapid review of evidence on how WFH influences an individual's mental and physical health, considering factors like prolonged work hours, sleep deprivation, and eye strain. The data collected from both primary and secondary sources will inform recommendations for employers to optimize the health of their workforce. The study aims to assess whether the positive effects of WFH outweigh the negatives or vice versa, recognizing the nuanced balance between the two.

## **RESEARCH QUESTION**

What was the connection between Work from Home & Mental and Physical health issues?

## **RESEARCH OBJECTIVE**

1. To assess the effects of remote work on individuals' physical and mental well-being through a comprehensive review.
2. To gauge employee responses to shifts in the work environment, examining their experiences and adaptations.
3. To examine both the adverse and beneficial outcomes of full-time remote work during the unavoidable circumstances imposed by the pandemic.
4. To formulate recommendations for individuals within organizations, providing guidance on maintaining and

stabilizing mental and physical health in the context of remote work.

## **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

The study employed a descriptive cross-sectional design, focusing on investigating the sample at a specific point in time to provide insights into the potential quantitative research problem. The research was conducted in Madhya Pradesh City, with a duration spanning from March 22nd to June 22nd, 2021. Primary data was collected through an online E-survey targeting well-informed individuals (both female and male) aged 18-60, possessing mobile devices and proficient connectivity with technological tools. A random sampling technique was employed for the E-survey, ensuring an equal chance of selection for every eligible individual in the population. Data collection involved a mixed-method approach, primarily utilizing an 11-questionnaire Google form for the online survey and secondary data sourced from online journals, organizational websites, literature, and various records. The data analysis was performed using infographics analysis and MS Excel. The data collection instrument comprised the questionnaire in the form of an online Google E-survey. Ethical considerations were paramount, with a focus on maintaining confidentiality, respecting participants' autonomy, and providing equal opportunities for inclusion. Privacy was upheld by conducting surveys in comfortable environments with only trusted individuals present.

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

Results obtained from the E-survey involving 100 respondents, representing our selective sampling size within the working age group (both female and male individuals aged 18-60, possessing mobile devices, and adept at using technology),

unveiled insightful perspectives on the intersection of Work from Home (WFH) and overall health impact. The accompanying figures provide a visual representation of the survey outcomes. A notable 30% of respondents perceived their overall health as fair, with an additional 21% describing it as poor, indicating a potential connection between WFH and the mental health of the working population. The survey findings suggest that factors such as limited communication with co-workers, blurred work-life boundaries, and overworking may contribute to these perceptions. The result highlights that only 33% of respondents did not experience sadness or depression in the past two weeks, with 40% reporting feelings of depression. The results suggest a correlation between employee dissatisfaction and issues such as inadequate work equipment and lack of a dedicated workspace at home.

Positive experiences were observed when employees had effective homework setups and supportive managers. Most respondents admitted to working beyond official hours, revealing a potential disregard for hour tracking policies and indicating a lack of standardized time-tracking methods. The study underlines the blurring of boundaries between work and home life, with individuals working in spaces intended for relaxation, leading to concerns about overwork and associated health issues. It indicates a close divide, with 51% of respondents expressing a lack of communication with co-workers. However, 49% reported having someone to communicate with about their concerns within the organization. The results underscore the need for organizations to enhance stress management policies, citing examples of companies like Infosys, Starbucks, and Twitter that have prioritized a supportive work culture, including WFH options.

The data reveals that over half of the respondents (53%) considered their physical health to be in good condition, while only 19% claimed poor physical health. The results suggest a significant correlation between the change in the work environment, especially the shift to WFH, and the overall mental and physical health status, attributing it to decreased physical movement and communication with co-workers. The findings indicate a lack of information among employees about organizational stress management policies, with 39% lacking clarity on the subject. The study emphasizes the need for companies to adopt new working cultures and introduces initiatives like paid leaves, counselling sessions, and on-call therapists to enhance employee well-being and productivity.

## **CONCLUSION**

In conclusion, this study sheds light on the substantial factors influencing the mental and physical health of employees during the Work from Home (WFH) setup and explores effective strategies for cultivating a positive WFH experience. The findings underscore a discernible decline in overall mental and physical well-being, accompanied by a surge in new cases of mental and physical health issues attributable to the WFH paradigm. This downturn is associated with diminished physical activity, communication challenges with co-workers, distractions during WFH, prolonged working hours, and heightened work pressure. However, amidst these challenges, the study reveals a promising dimension to WFH. A positive work experience is notably linked to factors such as a well-structured workstation, job satisfaction, and organizations actively engaging in stress management initiatives. These positive elements contribute to lower instances of mental and physical health issues among remote workers.

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