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Impact of mental disorders among staff at nursing homes.

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Objective: To study in a nation-wide sample the impact of recognized mental disorders on health care seeking and absence from work among nursing homes staff.

Methods and subjects. Staff at geriatric nursing homes with 10 or more employee answered a questionnaire regarding their health and work.

Results: A total 1518 (80%) responded and of those 11%, 12%, and 12% had sought treatment for depressive, anxiety or sleep disorders, respectively. Those so affected sought medical care more often than 3 times in year in 50% of cases, while among those not affected 30% did. They were also two times more likely to miss work due to their own sickness but also missed work more often for family reasons. Their sickness absence in a year was 4 days longer than that of those not affected.

Conclusion: Improvement of the mental health of nursing home staff may results in substantial gains for both the employee as well as the nursing homes.