



“WORK FROM HOME & IT’S CONNECTION WITH MENTAL & PHYSICAL HEALTH”.

Dr. Navleen Kaur
MBA HM (0941)

Under the guidance and supervision
Mentor – Dr. Mahender Kumar,

BACKGROUND

OBJECTIVE

- “It all started in March 2020, when our government decided to undergo nationwide lockdown and eventually, we all adapted to the new setup, new methods of working from home. The Aim – of this study is to learn & study the significant shift of the working environment along with its effect on the individual’s health and recommend ways in which a positive working environment could be established.
- Since now homes have now become people’s workplace as well as place to relax, the main objective is- To review the impact of work from home on people's physical and mental health.
- - To know employee reactions to the changes in the work environment
- - To discuss the negative and positive effects of full time working from home (WFH) due to the unavoidable scenario caused by Covid 19 pandemic.
- - To develop recommendations for the organizations on how to stabilize the mental and physical health of the people working from home.

INTRODUCTION

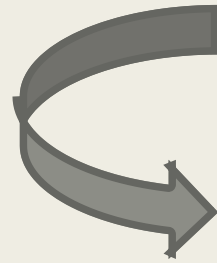
The global pandemic was caused by Covid19 in 2019, which gave rise to an unmanageable situation with vast extend of the health impacts along with affecting the economic.

It all started in March 2020, when our government decided to undergo nationwide lockdown and eventually, we all adapted to the new setup, new methods of working from home. The Aim of this study is to learn how working environment has been significantly changed and its effect on the individual's health.

There is a list of positive benefits linked with the teleworking, including work integration & family time, cost effective and improvement in the productivity. However, due to the new work culture there has been blurring of the boundaries linking the work and home., the problem which is being investigated is that, that the WFH Culture is a complex process and needs a structured examination to acknowledge the impact of environmental, physical, and psychosocial factors on an individual's physical & mental health.

Since Organizations are preferring & might continue the WFH culture in coming years, we need to undertake evidence to develop guidelines and policies to protect employee's well-being and overall health. Hence in this research study, will be taking a rapid review of the evidence on the impact of WFH on an individual's mental and physical health due to long ending work hours, lack of sleep, straining of eyes, etc. All the data collected by the primary and secondary study; it is considered to make recommendations for the employers to optimize the health of their employees. But everything come with pros and cons. So, to evaluate if WFH effects are positively dominant over the negative effects of it or it's vice a versa.

RESEARCH QUESTION



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

LITERATURE OF REVIEW (LOR)

After undergoing various articles and research papers, I took six studies to discuss further & in depth.

S.NO	YEAR	TITTLE	AUTHOR	METHODOLOGY	KEY FINDINGS
1	2020	Stressed out remote workers turn to artificial intelligence for help	Oracle and Workplace Intelligence	Based on a survey between July 16 – August 4, 2020. The study included people between the ages group of 22-74 years old. They were asked general questions around working from home experiences and employee attitudes. The questionnaire was circulated via email to record the responded answers and were provided with a small monetary incentive for doing	- Artificial intelligence has helped their mental health at work - Mental health needs to be an employer priority - Employees want help and are turning to AI technology - The impact of mental health struggles at work affect home life. - 6 in 10 claim that they find remote work more appealing now
2	2021	Impacts of Working from Home During COVID-19 Pandemic on Physical and Mental Well-Being of Office Workstation Users	J Occup Environ	A questionnaire was circulated (April 24- June 11, 2020) in which, 988 responded & were recorded. Chi square, multinomial logistic regression & linear regression test, were used to understand the relation between overall mental & physical health statuses & new emerging numbers of mental & physical health issues.	It was observed that there is a significant decrease in the physical and mental well-being. There was an increase in the work distractions & work expectations Communication between the co-workers was decreased while time spent at the work station from home, significantly increased by approximately by 1.5 hours. Only 1/3 rd responded claimed that they had a good & relaxed workstation set-up at home for WFH.

S.NO	YEAR	TITTLE	AUTHOR	METHODOLOGY	KEY FINDINGS
3	2020	Impact of COVID - 19 on mental health and physical load on women professionals: an online cross-sectional survey	Hina Vaish Nidhi Sharma ,	An online survey was conducted using a E-survey with couple of questionnaire to the Female professionals working from home during the lockdown. The age criteria for this study was the age more than 22 years, and who were willing to participate were included. To collect the data, snow ball sampling method was used and 537 people responded and was then evaluated.	Mental health was moderately and severely affected in 27.5% and 27% of participants respectively. 34.3% experienced great increase in physical load due to house hold chores during lockdown. 45.81% reported pain in neck and back region with 36.31% participants reported strain in their eyes sometimes. 15.08% and 8.37% had a tendency to over react in the present situation often and always respectively. The women performing work from home and work for home during the lock down are going through moderately increased physical and mental load. Their health is also affected by development of musculoskeletal problems.
4	2020	Initial psychological impact of COVID-19 and its correlates in Indian Community: An online (FEEL-COVID) survey	Neeraj Shiv Kumar Mohit Varshney , Jithin Thomas Parel,	An online survey was done (feel covid) using snowballing principle. Data was collected on socio-demographic & clinical variables related to COVID-19 & with the help of IESR Scale, to measure and analyse the psychological impact	Overall one third of respondents showed psychological impact with IES-R score > 24. With younger age, female gender population, there was higher psychological impact and physical illness. During the initial stages of pandemic in India, almost one-third respondents showed a significant psychological impact. This shows that there is a need for more systematic and longitudinal assessment of psychological needs of the population, which can help the organization in formulating a overall holistic interventions for the working population

S.no	Year	Title	Author	Methodology	Key findings
5	2013	An exploration of the psychological factors affecting remote e-worker's job effectiveness, well-being and work-life balance	Christine A. Grant, Peter C. Spurgeon	The paper is an exploratory study into the psychological factors affecting remote e-workers using qualitative thematic analysis of eleven in-depth interviews with e-workers, across five organisations and three sectors. All participants worked remotely using technology independent of time and location for several years and considered themselves to be experts	A summary of the practical implications from the findings of this study are provided below: (1) e-workers show adaptive behaviours and skills to manage working from home effectively. (2) Over-working was the major complaint from all the remote workers. Employers can mediate this issue by having clear goals and talking it out with their managers. (3) New technologies made it easier for the remote workers to do their work efficiently. (4) Proper communication along with a constant check on the working hours, well-being and performance of the employees by the managers had a significant importance in making a healthy WFH environment. (5) The psychological contract between the manager and the e-worker needs to be there for reducing the negative effects of WFH and increasing the work productivity.
6	2021	WORKING FROM HOME DURING THE COVID-19 LOCKDOWN: Changing preferences and the future of work	Heejung Chung, Hyojin Seo, Sarah Forbes, and Holly Birkett	Researchers between the 22nd of May - the 15th of June, researched on WFH during COVID-19 lockdown, wherein they conducted an online survey of UK employees. The aim for the study was to understand how working from home has influenced wide range work life issues, due to this pandemic.	The main key findings from this study were, * There has been increase in the work flexibility, by 86% employees working from home. * 90% of respondents felt their line of managers were supportive while working from home. * There was a positive aspects of WFH when employees identified that they were able to spend more time with their family, kids or with their partners. * 2/3 of employees said that boundaries were blurred between work/home & claimed it as a key negative aspect of WFH. * Unable to interact with colleagues was noted as a key negative aspect of WFH, specially from the people living alone at home. * Many women faced over working because of their double/triple shifts of work/care/home-schooling throughout the lockdown * Due to lack of equipment or space for work from home, people face the trouble. * Employees were convinced for continuing work from home because they wanted to reduce commuting times, more time with the family and in return it did increase the productivity & overall well being.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

- **STUDY DESIGN:** Descriptive Cross-Sectional Study
- **SETTING:** Madhya Pradesh City
- **DURATION OF STUDY:** 22nd March to 22nd June 2021.
- **TYPE OF DATA COLLECTION:** Primary data will be collected.
- **SAMPLE SIZE:** Well knowledgeable people (Female and Male of age 18-60) who have mobile and good connectivity with knowledge of using technology.
- **SAMPLING TECHNIQUE:** To conduct this E-survey, went for a Random sampling technique, wherein, the questionnaire was randomly sent to the individuals under the age limit, set for the study, hence giving every member of the population, an equal chance of being selected.

- **DATA COLLECTION PROCEDURE:** The data collection will be done by doing an online E- survey with a mixed- method approach.

- **DATA ANALYSIS PROCEDURE:** The data analysis would be done through infographics analysis & MS excel.

- **DATA COLLECTION INSTRUMENT:** Data collection instrument would include a questionnaire google E-survey.

RESULTS & ANALYSIS

To study the impact of working from home because of covid-19 had on people's health, a primary research based on an e-survey was done along with undergoing various articles and research papers, to discuss further & in depth.

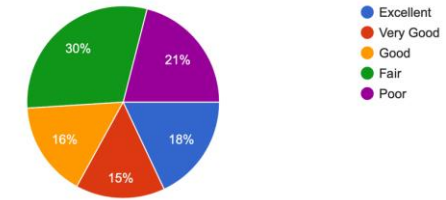
The results were received from the E-survey done with 100 respondents (our selective sampling size) which where under the working age group (Female and Male of age 18-60 with mobile and good connectivity with knowledge of using technology)

showing interesting insights into how people feel about WFH and the impact on their overall health. Here are the 11 questionnaires with the results to do the analysis

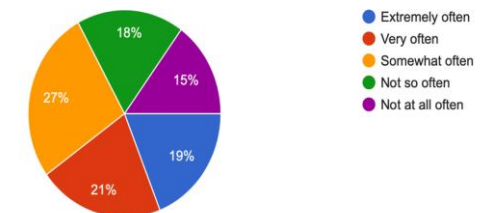
These results show that most people (30%) claimed their overall health be Fair, followed by 21% saying it to be poor. Only 18% rated their overall mental health to be excellent. This can reflect a link between WFH & the effect on the mental health of the working population. Also from the studies, we can see a clear link on how working from home did affect most of the e-workers because of many factors like – Lack of communication with their co-workers, boundaryless working hours, overworking etc.

Collectively only 33% said that they didn't feel sad or depressed while 40% did feel depressed during the past 2 weeks. There showed a major link where working employees were not satisfied because of lack of work equipment, separate space for working from home. The studies taken under consideration also proved that employees with better work system at home along with understanding line of managers, they were happy and consider continuing work from home in coming future.

How will you rate your overall mental health?
100 responses



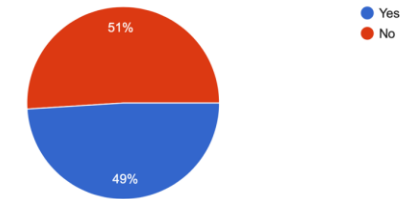
During the past two weeks how often have you felt sad or depressed
100 responses



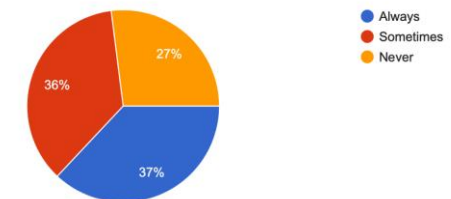
The results were quite close, with 51% respondents showing that there is a lack of communication between the co-workers. Whereas, it does show that few organizations did work on their stress management policies & hence 49% did say that they have someone to communicate with about their concerns within the organization. Many companies like Infosys, Starbucks, Twitter, and many more have taken great initiative for reinforcing a better work culture & also gave their employees the option of working from home some or all of the time. Companies should learn and implement the same for their employees.

The majority of respondents did work after the working hours, proving that the hour tracking policies are being overlooked, and shows lack of standard methods of tracking time and holding unrealistic expectations. The studies taken also proves that work from home made the boundaries blurry between work and home life. People are working from home where they use to relax. Overtime is noticed and complained by most of the remote working employees, claiming that there is an over workload which is leading to major health related issues

Do you feel like you can talk to someone or ask for help with mental or physical health issues with your co-workers?
100 responses

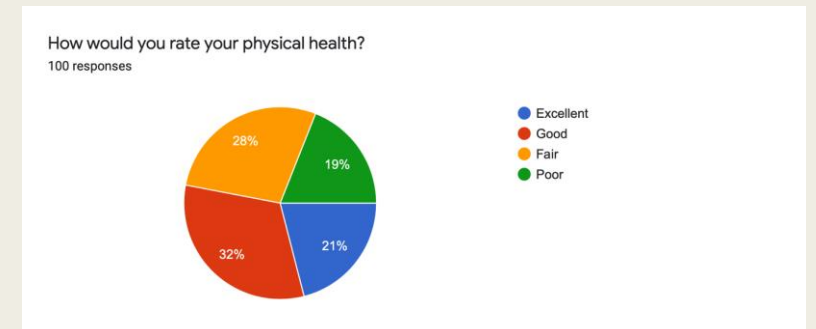
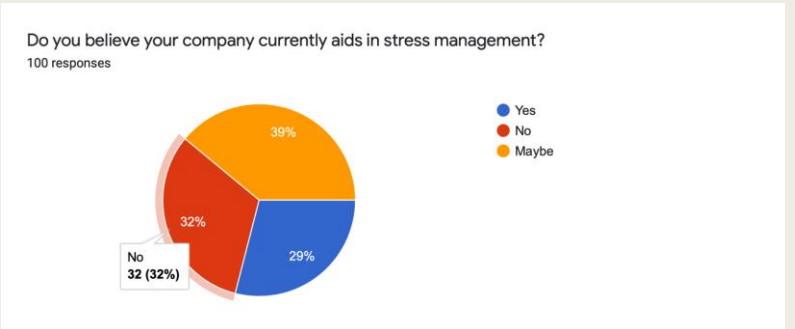


Do you work after the work hours?
100 responses



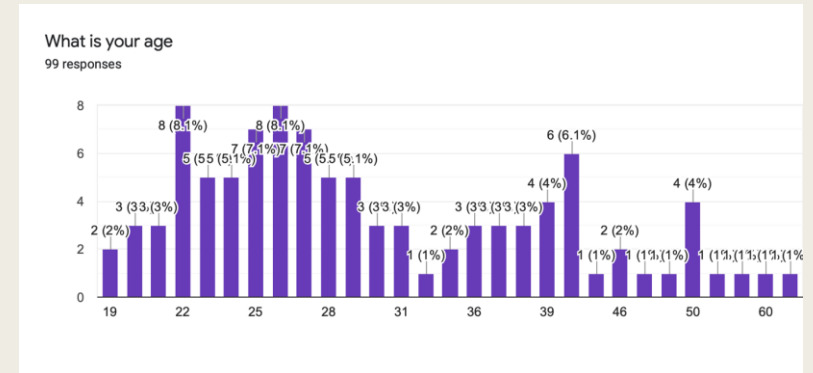
Interestingly, the results show that there is a lack of information among the employees about their organizational policies because 39% said that they did not have a clear idea about the stress management aids. 32% did say yes whereas 29% respondents didn't have any stress management aids in their company. Many companies are also adapting to this new working culture, which will continue in the coming futures. Paid leaves, counselling sessions, stress management on call therapist etc are some new initiatives by the organizations for better well-being of their employees and increasing work productivity.

Collectively, more than half of the respondents 53% did say that their physical health is under good condition. Only 19% claimed to have poor physical health, which does show a significant linkage with change in the work environment. The studies definitely reported that there is a significant downfall in overall mental & physical health and there is an increased in the number of new cases in mental & physical health issues due to work from home. Also there was a significant decreased of mental & physical health status due to the decreased physical movement/ activity, lack of communication with co-workers



The sample size was 100 selective respondents, from the age group 19-60 years old.

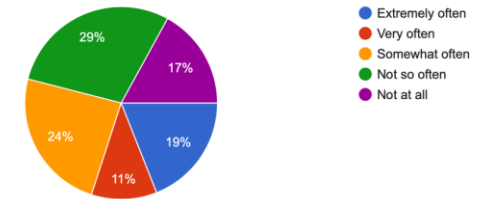
Nearly half of respondents said that they have fair work life balance. But we can't ignore the 26.3% who stated that they are unable to maintain or adjust to the new settings of WFH culture. But in studies it also showed that there was a positive aspects of WFH when employees identified that they were able to spend more time with their family, kids or with their partners.



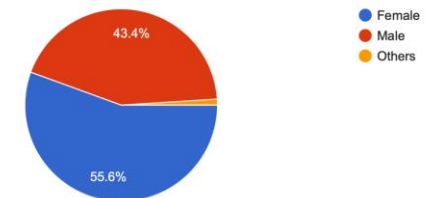
17% stated that they did not get time to engage into some physical activity, followed by 29% & 24% who still did not fully get time to spare to do the activities apart from work. Only 19% of the respondent stated that they did get time. The results makes it obvious that even though the working hours are fixed but due to WFH, these time boundaries are being overlooked. Studies did show that there was a significant decreased of mental & physical health status due to the decreased physical movement/ activity, lack of communication with co-workers,being distracted while WFH, increased working hours & work pressure

The result were pretty balanced and had both female and male respondents, who took this survey. In studies, it did underline that female workers did see more burden while working from home. They got double duties for looking out to the household work along with work from home. With younger age, female gender population, there was higher psychological impact and physical illness But apart from this point, gender didn't play much of the significant role because all the working employees showed visible impact on their health due to WFH

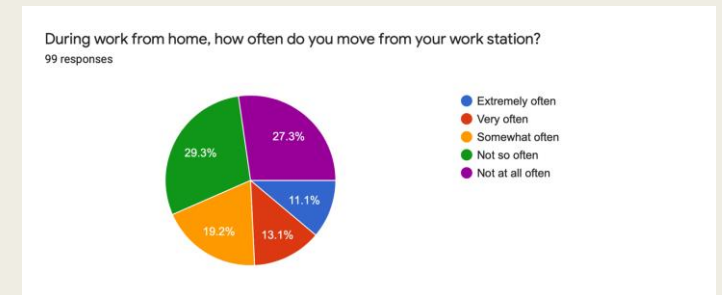
Did you get time apart from work, to engage in some physical activities like exercises, outdoor games etc?
100 responses



What is your Gender
99 responses



The results are shocking because more than half of the respondents 56.6% didn't move much during WFH which is a huge concern for their overall physical health. Studies showed that due to over-working, they didn't get much time to interact with their family or do physical workouts. There was a need that the employers should mediate this issue by having clear goals and talking it out with their managers



Discussions

- As per the study results , we can infer that physical and mental health had been impacted by the work from home, both can be correlated at physical health can affect mental health and vice versa. Some of the contributing factors could be decreased physical activity, lack of communication with co-workers, overworking because of clear boundary between personal life and professional life. A significant number of participants had responded positively on the survey and that can be attributed to better family support, infrastructure aiding working, home gym setup and good communication skills.
- Compared to different studies already cited we can see the same pattern reinforcing the conclusion that work from home had an adverse effect on peoples mental and physical health.
- The study is limited by the sample size of participants and the true randomness in selecting the participants. The cultural similarities in the participants can add bias to the sample and hence the results can be biased too.

SUMMARY & CONCLUSION

- The overall study highlights the significant factors which are impacting employees' mental and physical health during work from home & also considering best ways to have a positive work from home experience. The studies reported that there is a significant downfall in overall mental & physical health and there is an increased in the number of new cases in mental & physical health issues due to work from home. Also, there was a significant decreased of mental & physical health status due to the decreased physical movement/ activity, lack of communication with co-workers, being distracted while WFH, increased working hours & work pressure. But there was a significant data that showed the positive side of WFH if there was a good workstation set up, work satisfaction, organizations conducting stress management events, experiencing lower chances of mental and physical health issues. Lastly, a regular & clear communication channel between the managers and their employees / team members is very important to help and reduce the negative impacts linked with working from home.

Recommendations

Setting boundaries while working from home

Encouraging and incorporating cloud solutions in an organisation, so that people can access it from anywhere.

Many companies like Infosys, Starbucks, Twitter, and many more have taken great initiative for reinforcing a better work culture & also gave their employees the option of working from home some or all of the time. Companies should learn and implement the same for their employees.

Fixed timelines. The employers should not encourage their employees to send work related mails or files after the work hour ends. They can set some realistic goals so that the employees do not get overwhelmed by projects.

To encourage small enterprises to adopt Work from home measures by providing subsidy and other incentives.

Sitting too long and too much of screen time can affect the health of the person so some break times should be inculcated. Some fun activities can be conducted on weekly basis like informal interaction between the co-workers etc.

Reach out for support.

The organisation should make sure to have a friendly communication channel between them and among the co-workers. - Weekly feedback forms can help a lot to understand and build a healthy relation between the employers and employees.

A comfortable and suitable environment to work in home should be encouraged. Companies like Deloitte, did sponsor a home- work setup for their employees can be promoted and should be included by other organisations

A dedicated workspace without mixing it with the home space.

Organizations should conduct Stress management programs and encourage everyone to be a part of it.

A Chat box to answer health related questions.

On demand online counselling services provided by the company for its employees



THANK YOU

