

- Women—Mental health

Women working long hours more likely to show signs of depression

The Korea Herald · 12 Jan 2024 · 3 · By Lee Jaeun (jenn@heraldcorp.com)

Women who work long hours and have conflicting demands from family and work are more likely to experience symptoms of depression, a study showed Thursday.

A study in the *Journal of the International Archives of Occupational and Environmental Health* suggested that such women were 35 percent more likely to have depressive symptoms compared to those with standard hours.

In contrast, there was no significant difference in depression rates among male workers with or without long hours, even when the demands of family and work conflict.

The elevated depression risk for female workers is attributed to the additional stress they face, being compelled to manage various family-related responsibilities in South Korean society, including household chores, family affairs, children's school run, and overall child care, researchers noted.

The data sources used were the results of the 2020 sixth Korean Working Conditions Survey, conducted by the Occupational Safety and Health Research Institute, with a total of 20,384 full-time wage workers.

The proportion of workers who experienced conflicting demands from work and family exceeded 40 percent among both men and women.

Conflicting demands include commitments in the family that interfere with work life, such as the presence of young children, primary responsibility for children, elder care responsibilities, interpersonal conflict within the family unit, or unsupportive family members.

Some 43 percent of male workers and 49.5 percent of female workers reported difficulty concentrating on work due to family responsibilities.