

Videoconferencing apps may lead to more worker fatigue: report

Setting up another conference call? Your employees might be tired



BY [Dexter Tilo](#) / 16 Jul 2022 / [Share](#)

Videoconferencing has probably become the newest staple in workplaces because of the shift to remote and hybrid arrangements - but a new report revealed that this is also why employees are suffering from higher levels of fatigue.

A study from researchers at [Nanyang Technological University](#), Singapore (NTU Singapore), surveyed 1,145 residents with full-time jobs to analyse how videoconferencing has affected them. Based on the report,

these employees spend about three days working from home and about nine hours of work each weekday, while also being frequent users of videoconferencing.

The implementation of this tech has become a necessity to keep employees connected amid the pandemic, and as workplaces transition to arrangements that fit their workers' demand. However, videoconferencing also has its drawbacks - particularly on well-being.

According to the report, 46.2% of the respondents said they feel fatigue or suffer from being overwhelmed, tired, or drained from the use of videoconferencing applications.

"We found that there was a clear relation between the increased use of videoconferencing and fatigue in Singaporean workers," said Assistant Professor Benjamin Li, from the NTU Wee Kim Wee School of Communication and Information (WKWSCI).

Researchers from the NTU's WKWSCI and its Centre for Information Integrity and the Internet (IN-cube) attributed the fatigue to the "mirror anxiety."

The "mirror anxiety" refers to the feeling of self-consciousness triggered by the self-view during a videoconference, according to the researchers, and this creates fatigue among users

They also attributed it to the stress and social anxiety prompted by the dramatic increase of amount of eye contact from videoconferencing.

"Our findings are even more relevant in today's context, as the use of videoconferencing tools is here to stay, due to flexible work arrangements being a continuing trend," said Li.

Read more: [Feeling the Zoom fatigue? Here's why those video calls are making you so tired](#)

Internet not helping

The study also looked at how a reliable internet connection on videoconferencing could affect an employee's fatigue levels.



"We have all experienced frustration when our online media experiences such as when we are watching YouTube or Netflix get disrupted because of a poor internet connection," said Li. "The video lags and the picture quality worsen, resulting in a disappointing viewing experience. It may be the same with videoconferences, perhaps more so as important information could be lost when the connection is choppy, leading to more frustration and fatigue."

"So, a reliable internet connection appears to make us less frustrated when there are only a few videoconferences to attend to. What the results suggest is that when users are overwhelmed with many videoconferences, even the quality of the internet connection does not help."

In fact, the frequent use of videoconferencing, when combined with users' internet satisfaction, increase fatigue levels by 10%, according to the report.

Read more: [Why HR should be worried about workplace fatigue](#)

Employers' responsibilities

With these findings, the researchers advised employers to be more mindful when implementing technology in their workplaces.

"As more organisations move toward embracing a hybrid work model where videoconferencing plays a significant role in how people meet and work, employers should be mindful of both the benefits and drawbacks of such technology in the workplace," said Assistant Professor Edmund Lee, also from NTU's WKWSCI and assistant director of IN-cube, in a statement.

"While videoconferencing tools are easy to navigate and useful in scheduling meetings, the downside is that people may end up packing their day with back-to-back meetings, leading to exhaustion at the end of the workday."

Associate Professor Edson Tandoc, IN-cube director and from NTU's WKWSCI, said that it is now up to employers on how they could ease the fatigue from too much videoconference tools.



"The onus is on employers to continue exploring what may help to cushion the fatiguing impact of frequent use of videoconferencing tools, as many employees continue to rely on these tools to carry out their daily work routines."

Related stories

Feeling overwhelmed? You could be suffering from 'meeting fatigue'

COVID fatigue? Leadership tips to revitalise your team

Free newsletter

Our daily newsletter is FREE and keeps you up-to-date with the world of HR. Please complete the form below and click on subscribe for daily newsletters from HRD Asia.

Enter your Email address here

SIGN UP

0 Comments

Human Resources Director

Privacy Policy

1 Login

Favorite

Tweet

Share

Sort by Best

Start the discussion...

LOG IN WITH

OR SIGN UP WITH DISQUS

Name


Be the first to comment.

Subscribe

Add Disqus to your siteAdd DisqusAdd

Do Not Sell My Data

Recent articles & video



Workplace sexual harassment in Singapore: How can HR end the...



Videoconferencing apps may lead to more worker fatigue: report

