Introduction
Standby duty is an aviation specific form of on-call work that can be described as background duty. Employees can freely choose their whereabouts, but have to be available and must be at work within a certain time. Research in other sectors shows negative impacts of on-call work on employees in terms of increased stress, impairment of sleep and mental health (Nicol & Botterill, 2004; Vahle-Hinz & Bamberg, 2009). These effects occurred regardless of whether employees were called or not (Bamberg, Dettmers, Funck, Krähe, & Vahle-Hinz, 2012).

In this study we investigated the impact of standby duty on well-being, quality of sleep and irritation of aviation personnel. Furthermore we considered moderating effects of personality traits like self-efficacy and worry disposition.

Hypotheses
H1: Standby duty negatively effects well-being, quality of sleep, and irritation.
H2: Employees with a higher self-efficacy suffer less from standby.
H3: Employees with a lower worry disposition suffer less from standby.

Research Model

Method
Sample and Procedure
N=37 pilots and flight attendants of a German airline participated in an electronic diary study comparing standby duty and days off representing the day level. In addition, they completed an online questionnaire to assess organizational and personal factors representing the person level.

Mean age: M=36.32 (SD=7.89)
Male: 73%; Pilots: 62.2%.

Measures
Well-being:
Day Level: 6 Items on a 6-point Mood Questionnaire (MDMQ; Wilhelm & Schoebi, 2007)

Quality of Sleep:
Day Level: 4 Items on the basis of a sleep problem scale (Jenkins, Stanton, Niemcryk, & Rose, 1988)

Irritation:
Day Level: 7 items on a 5-point scale - Irritation Scale (Mohr, Rigotti, & Müller, 2009)

Standby:
Day Level: 4 days Standby (2 weekdays and two weekends), 2 days off

Self-efficacy:
Person Level: 10 items on a 4-point scale – General self-efficacy scale (Schwarzer & Jerusalem, 1999)

Worry Disposition:
Person Level: 4 items on a 5-point worry disposition scale (Schulz, Schlotz, & Becker, 2004)

Analyses
Multi-level approach (HLM).

Model 1: Null model
Model 2: Standby duty group mean centered on the day level as predictor.
Model 3: Person level-predictors (grand mean centered) testing main and interaction effects with standby duty.

Results

Conclusion
1. Standby duty negatively effects employees' well-being, quality of sleep, and irritation.
2. Self-efficacy does not have a direct effect on the DVs, but employees with a higher self-efficacy suffer less from standby concerning irritation.
3. Lower worry disposition positively effects quality of sleep and irritation, but has no interaction effect with standby duty.

References


Panja Goerke & Henning Soll
Aviation and Space Psychology
German Aerospace Center, Hamburg