



American Business Travelers Suffering from High Stress and Unhealthy Habits

Over a third of business travelers feel more stressed than normal during work trips while a majority say they are less likely to exercise, according to a new survey from On Call International

SALEM, NH – December 6, 2017 – The health of the U.S.’s frequent business travelers may be quickly deteriorating due to high stress levels and the hectic nature of work-related travel. According to a national survey by [On Call International](#), a leading travel risk management company, a majority of business travelers (54 percent) say they are less likely to exercise on a work trip compared to when they are not traveling. To make matters worse, 44 percent say they are more likely to eat unhealthy foods during business travel.

Business travel can be frantic – riddled with early mornings, late nights and non-stop meetings, all without the normal comfort and routine one experiences while at home. It appears that this hectic, high-pressure nature of business trips could be playing a significant role in travelers’ unhealthy behaviors. Over a third of business travelers (36 percent) believe work-related travel makes them more stressed than normal. Thirty-six percent also reported having difficulty sleeping while on these trips.

“An unhealthy diet and a lack of regular exercise can have adverse consequences on a business traveler’s wellbeing, often leading to, or worsening, serious health problems. In addition to this, chronic and acute stress can cause several issues for a business traveler that can lead to deterioration of health and a decrease in work productivity and performance while on the road,” said Dr. William Siegart, Chief Medical Officer at On Call International. “Stress can lead to headaches, gastrointestinal distress and chest pain. It can exacerbate nearly every pre-existing condition and can lead to the development or worsening of anxiety, depression, skin rashes, asthma, cardiovascular disease and more. As our survey results indicate, stress can also lead to sleep deprivation. Sleep is essential for maintaining cognitive processes, and when deprived of it, a business traveler greatly compromises their attention, alertness, concentration and critical decision-making abilities.”

In addition to this added stress, more than one in 10 (13 percent) have difficulty remembering to take daily medications while on a work trip. Many business travelers are also taking part in other unhealthy vices they otherwise would not be – clearly letting loose while away from their typical environments. Sixteen percent say they drink more on business trips compared to when they are not traveling, while eight percent are more likely to smoke cigarettes.

“These results are concerning, and it is up to both business travelers *and* their employers to turn the trend around,” added Dr. Siegart. “Organizations have a duty of care to ensure the health and safety of their traveling employees and should focus on mitigating the dangers of their travelers falling into

unhealthy habits on the road. I would recommend hosting pre-travel health workshops to reinforce healthy travel behaviors such as eating right, finding time for quick, simple exercises that can be executed anywhere, and working to identify and manage their most frequent causes of stress. These best practices can also have a positive impact on travelers' overall, long-term health.”

While travelling to different countries for work could potentially cause even more stress and health issues due to longer, more strenuous trips, time zone changes and unfamiliar cultures and surroundings, the survey found that only about a quarter of frequent business travelers (27 percent) consider how their health will be impacted by their different environment when traveling internationally.

Organizations with employees that travel abroad are encouraged to elevate this issue in order to mitigate any potential related risks.

Employers are also encouraged to implement a holistic travel risk management program that incorporates proactive education and training to help mitigate and respond to health-related travel risks. This is integral to not only protecting traveler health and well-being, but also fulfilling duty of care and protecting the organization.

Survey Methodology

The findings are based on a Google Consumer Survey of 1,000 frequent business travelers. Google Consumer Surveys automatically field a validated, representative sample of respondents and allocate users according to the demographic spread of U.S. Census data of Internet users.

About On Call International

When traveling, every problem is unique – a medical crisis, a political threat, even a common incident such as a missed flight. But every solution starts with customized care that ensures travelers are safe and protected. That's why for over 20 years, On Call International has provided fully-customized travel risk management services protecting millions of travelers, their families, and their organizations. For more information visit: www.oncallinternational.com; follow us on [Twitter](#) and LinkedIn; like us on Facebook and visit the On Call blog.