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productive and have higher absentee levels than those not operating under excessive pressure, according to research from professional services firm Towers Watson.

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Employees who have high stress levels at work also have lower engagement, are less productive and have higher absentee levels than those not operating under excessive pressure, according to research from professional services firm Towers Watson.

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excessive pressure in their job and this can lead to higher instances of disengagement and absenteeism, which are clear indicators of low productivity in the workplace.”

According to the research, absence levels are also influenced by stress with highly stressed employees taking an average of 4.6 sick days per year compared to 2.6 days for low stress employees. ‘Presenteeism’ – the act of attending work when unwell and unproductive – was 50 percent higher for highly stressed employees with an average of 16 days per year versus around 10 days for employees claiming to have low stress.

“Wellness is about promoting changes in behavior and encouraging a healthy lifestyle,” Haymes added. “Companies could take more responsibility for educating employees about the benefits of better sleep, physical activity, good nutrition and a work life balance in order to keep employees healthy, happy and productive. Some companies are making great progress in this area and are already starting to see the business benefits of having a healthy workforce.”

The reasons for high stress levels were also explored in the research. Inadequate staffing was the biggest cause cited by employees with over half (53 percent) naming it as a top cause of workplace stress. However, few employers consider this to be a major problem, with only 15 percent of senior managers acknowledging it as a cause of stress in their organization. Conversely, a third (34 percent) of employers thought technology that made employees available outside working hours was one of the top causes of stress but employees largely disagreed, with only eight percent listing it as a contributor to workplace pressure.

“If business leaders want to promote a lower stress environment in their workplace it’s vital that they understand the real causes of stress in their organization,” Haymes said. “These can be specific areas that are not immediately visible to management if good communication and feedback structures are not in place throughout the

organization. Without this, even the most well-meaning management team can find

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