Remote Work and Mental Health: A Focused Review of Anxiety and Depression

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This review synthesizes empirical evidence on the relationship between remote work and depression and anxiety, two of the most prevalent mental health conditions worldwide. This integrative review employed a structured literature search of the Web of Science (WoS) Core Collection, supplemented by Google Scholar and backward reference searching, to identify relevant empirical studies published between January 2020 and March 2026. Twenty-nine empirical studies met the inclusion criteria. Studies were synthesized according to study characteristics, findings, and proposed mechanisms. The findings revealed substantial heterogeneity. Several studies reported positive associations between remote work and depression and/or anxiety, whereas others reported protective effects or non-significant relationships. Adverse outcomes were most frequently linked to social, organizational, and domestic stressors, whereas favorable outcomes were associated with autonomy, flexibility, and organizational support. Overall, the evidence does not support the conclusion that remote work is inherently harmful to mental health. Rather, by focusing specifically on depression and anxiety, this review demonstrates that the mental health implications of remote work are highly context dependent and shaped more by underlying psychosocial conditions than by work location alone. Organizations seeking to improve employee mental health therefore should focus on modifiable factors such as social connectedness, workload management, flexibility, and organizational support rather than relying solely on return-to-office policies.

Keywords
remote work; work from home; telework; hybrid work; depression; anxiety

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